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AN
ENGLISH
GIRL *IN*
PARIS



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An English Girl in Paris

Witty Books of Social Satire

THE VISITS OF ELIZABETH
By ELINOR GLYN. (*Sixtieth Thousand*)

THE LETTERS OF HER
MOTHER TO ELIZABETH
(*Seventh Thousand*)

COMMENTS OF A COUNTESS

An English Girl in Paris

Constance Elizabeth Maud



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An English Girl in Paris

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

MY old uncle Jack Mortimer lives in Paris in a charming little *appartement* in the Avenue Friedland, where he has been installed ever since his wife died, some ten years ago. She taught him to love Paris, and now he could not live anywhere else if he tried. Yet he remains, in spite of this, entirely British, with all his insular prejudices and even his English accent intact, though from long and intimate intercourse with French people he knows their language "from cellar to garret."

Most English women can take root in Paris if they are planted there young enough, and find the soil congenial, even going to the length of a French husband, without apparently suffering any radical or deteriorating change of character. But the Englishman, the genuine uncompromising

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My insular uncle John Bull, always seems as out of place in that sparkling evanescent city of *frou-frous* and *soufflés* as a forest oak transplanted to the parterre of the Petit Trianon. His tongue does not take easily to the nimble twists and turns of the language, and Uncle Jack declares that the Englishman who does achieve this advantage pays for it by a loss of some essential English quality, in short he views the glib linguist with grave suspicion.

.

It has been an understood thing for some time past that every year, without fail, I spend at least two months with Uncle Jack. My two little rooms are kept always ready, and though May and June are my favourite months I have sometimes put in a few weeks besides in the late autumn. For Uncle Jack and Paris form a combination at all times hard to resist. I include under "Paris" not only French hats and theatres but French people — old and young — men, women, and children — not indiscriminately, for I am forced to make an exception here and there of a *cocher* or a *concierge*, but still in quite

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sufficient numbers to make life uncommonly *British*
pleasant. *ego*

Considering the fact that for centuries we have lived side by side in closest proximity with nothing but that silver ribbon of water to divide us, it is really astonishing what strangers we are to each other, we English and French. The ignorance is about equally balanced, though the prejudice engendered by it, I am inclined to think, is greater on our side than theirs. Deep down in the very roots of the average Briton's being (in so far as I may be allowed to judge by my own nearest and dearest, especially of the male sex) lurks a belief in his own innate superiority and a consequent contempt for everything and everybody "foreign." I have no wish to set myself the hopeless and invidious task of attacking these or any other rooted convictions; but I have had the good luck to get a little glimpse from the French point of view and to become acquainted with some rather various specimens of the natives among their own surroundings. Whether the one nation is superior or inferior to the

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*British
ego*

other troubles me as little as the same much-vexed question with regard to sex; the interest lies in both cases in the fact of their essential dissimilarity, while the French preconceived notions about myself, my habits and customs as an English girl, are a continual source of amusement and surprise. On the one hand, I am allowed a most convenient liberty of action on the plea *c'est une jeune fille anglaise*; on the other, I am supposed, if true to my nationality, to be always in an attitude of shocked prudery. They are, however, pathetically off the track as to what really shocks English susceptibilities. *C'est "shokin'" ça?* they inquire anxiously of something wholly inoffensive, but the next minute without a qualm will say what makes you feel as if six thousand years' civilisation had been suddenly blown away.

I have always been thankful I never had to learn French in cold blood, with grammar and dictionary. Through the French nurses and governess of my youth, supplemented by occasional winters in the South of France, the language filtered into my being as a child, with blissful unconsciousness of

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its difficulties, and though I am painfully *French as she's spoke* aware of what a gulf lies between this limited degree of familiarity and the real Parisian of the French "*salon*" and "*académie*" yet I feel thankful for the benefit this "small mercy" has proved to me; for without it I must have remained always an outsider. One rarely meets either a French man or woman who can speak English with ease; and even when they do know something of the language, unlike our German neighbours, who brandish their few lame sentences in your face before the introduction is finished, our French friends modestly conceal their light under a bushel, and if you do succeed in dragging it out will apologise for their *quelques petits mots* with deprecating waves of their expressive hands.

There is one point on which, however, I never found any disposition to hold back on the part of my French friends. Of whatever class, they show invariably an insatiable interest in my private personal affairs—the more personal and private, in fact, the greater their thirst for knowledge and the more unblushing their endeavours to acquire

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Tactful it. I know, of course, that this somewhat
Uncle Jack aggressive curiosity is often prompted by a genuine friendly interest, such as in England is rarely met with outside the pale of close relationship ; but for all that a British dislike to giving myself away makes me rejoice in balking and baffling all inquiring friends : and I flatter myself there are three points on which, even after some years of most friendly annual intercourse, not one among them has obtained any precise information, viz., my age, my income, and my " heart affairs." Uncle Jack has a sort of sketchy notion about all three, but he is so delightfully vague no one ever gets anything precise out of him. He generally refers all such inquirers to me myself — " Of what age is my niece Betty ? *Ma foi*, but I ought to know. Let us see ; Betty must be — twenty and something, I suppose. But she will know, ask her."

There is an artless simplicity and directness about their mode of approach which remind one of an Ollendorf dialogue.

" You are the unique child of your parents, mademoiselle ? "

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"No, madame, I have two brothers." *French cu-*

"Your brothers they are without doubt *riosity*
still young?"

"Yes, madame, my brothers they are
still young."

"Your brothers, however, are more aged
than you?"

"The one he is more aged, the other he
is more young."

"And the more aged, what age has he?"

"Ah, dear madame, he is a young man
very singular, but of a singularity, see you
— he has made me to make an oath that
never will I reveal his age; it is his little
point of folly to make of it a mystery."

"*Mon Dieu*, but it is an original, that one
there!" A pause. "And the younger, he
is without doubt still making his education?"

"But yes! The younger he makes still
his examinations, the poor little one."

As this information applies equally well to
the schoolboy or the officer of almost any
rank in the service, I don't feel that I have
parted with any valuable clue.

In the minds of most people the income
or "dot" of a *jeune fille* (this designation

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My fian- covers as wide a field as that of "girl"
cial stand- in English) is so intimately connected with
ing the "affairs of the heart" that the transition

from one to the other is scarcely perceptible.
Here is another Ollendorf example :

"Mademoiselle is not yet *fiancée*, no?"

"No, madame, for the moment I am not
fiancée."

"But very soon, without doubt, the affair
will be decided? We shall receive the *faire-*
parts (notices)?"

"Without doubt, dear madame."

"Ah, but this is charming! and it is an
Englishman, the *fiancé*? or better still, a
Frenchman, that we lose you not?"

"I have not yet made the choice. They
are so charming, all the two! It is an em-
barrassment of riches, see you."

"Ah, that I comprehend well! But,
madame, your mother, she will of course de-
cide for you to take that one whose position
is the best: is it not so? Also as the
favourite niece of monsieur your uncle, who
happily lacks children, you will very surely
make a handsome marriage?"

My thoughts fly off to a certain detri-

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mental sailor cousin a-sailing on the sea far *Masculine* away, whose gold is all either on his uniform *beauty* or, as I have had occasion to point out to him, in his beard.

I laugh involuntarily. "My mother knows well, and my uncle also, that for me it is a necessity the bridegroom be handsome, even if the marriage is not," I answer.

"Ah," — clutching at a straw, — "there is then one whom you like well?"

"But yes, dear lady, not only one but several; to truth say, me I love always *every* man who says beautiful things to me, in the same time that he also is beautiful. Behold the difficulty!"

"Me I like not the English system of so much liberty," reflects the anxious inquirer, decidedly. "It is much better for the young girl that she experience love only after she is married." This opens the door to a lively discussion on our respective national customs, and I steer safely off the shoals of personal ground.

But to return to Uncle Jack. If possible I never fail to be with him in June. Paris is delicious in its garment of tender greens, and

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Useful then I feel it a duty to keep an eye on my
Perrette uncle about the time of the Grand Prix. Perrette cannot follow him to Longchamps, and she and I both agree he ought on no account to go alone. What my uncle would do without Perrette I can't imagine. Well, he simply would not "do" at all.

Perrette has been with him ever since my aunt died. She is everything, knows everything, and does everything in that very *recherché* little "*appartement*" in the Avenue Friedland. The flitting forms of a *femme de ménage* or *frotteur* are sometimes seen in the distance, but they disappear and vanish at Madame Perrette's pressure of a button, and my uncle is pleasantly conscious of their existence.

No one can serve a more dainty little *déjeuner à trois* or dinner for a *partie quar-rée* than Perrette. Not only are the excellent *consommés*, *vol au vent*, *chateaubriands*, etc., entirely the work of her skilled hands, but she herself assists in waiting on us, no one else being permitted to hand these dainties to her master. In her snowy apron and stiff frilled cap, Perrette's comely, vigor-

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ous face is a joy to look upon. Her eyes *And her* are everywhere; she divines your needs *virtues* before you are aware of them; at the same time her attention to her master never relaxes for a moment. He refers to her continually, for Perrette's memory is phenomenal.

"Say, then, Perrette, when did I buy that Moreau over the *escritoire*?" or, "Perrette, you silly woman, can you not help me then? What day was it Monsieur le Comte called to take me to the Chamber?"

"To hear the debate which so enraged monsieur? My faith, but I shall forget never that Tuesday! Yesterday five weeks it was. Monsieur would eat nothing when he returned."

"That will do, Perrette. How the women love to chatter! Yesterday five weeks it was." And my uncle goes on without Perrette's assistance for another short spell.

Amongst her numerous vocations Perrette is also my uncle's medical adviser, and few doctors can boast a more thorough knowledge of their patient's constitution, temper, and digestion. Of course Perrette's opportunities afford her exceptional advantages.

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Uncle
Jack's
digestion

Handing him an *entrée*, she will murmur into my uncle's ear :

"This sauce would be as poison to monsieur. Avoid to partake of it." Or, "There is no cheese in this *plat* ; it is expressly prepared for the digestion of monsieur."

Thus she watches over him in times of danger. And when he dines out among his friends where her eagle eye cannot follow, she arms him with cautions before he sets out, and fortifies him with antidotes and *tisanes* on his return.

No one can drive a better bargain than Madame Perrette, yet no one more scrupulously restricts herself to the legitimate sou in the franc as perquisite.

Not a soul in the market place where Perrette's stiffly frilled cap is a familiar feature but welcomes her with a respectful "*Hé bonjour, M^{ame} Perrette*, and how can I serve you to-day ?"

"Monsieur had a great indigestion after the *poulet* you sold to my Justine last Wednesday — he must have been already of a ripe age in the time of the Empire ! I

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trust you have something more solacing for *A fowl* his poor stomach to-day." And Perrette *fancier* examines the chickens and ducks severely, while the seller of poultry apologises humbly for the unlucky fowl, explaining that Mam'selle Justine had made such a point of size and weight perhaps he may have been a thought less tender than usual — but only a thought. Here was another soft as an oyster — a noble bird fit for the President! She should have it five sous cheaper because there was no one like Madame Perrette for discerning the perfect article."

Most people in that market would sooner imperil their souls by cheating a priest than try to get the better of Madame Perrette.

But it is not only over my uncle's health and purse that Perrette mounts guard. The watch she keeps over his heart is no less vigilant.

There was a certain charming widow, Madame de Bourgogne, who used at one time to be a frequent visitor at the Avenue Friedland. She possessed, so she told us, an old château in Brittany, but preferred

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The gay widow the more sociable life of the gay capital. From the first Perrette regarded this lady with suspicion and disfavour, notwithstanding her most agreeable manners and beguiling appearance. Both my uncle and I fell speedily under her fascination. I even went so far as to introduce her at her special request to my treasure of a dress-maker, Madame Girot. She was enchanted with the creations of my *artiste*, and ordered three dresses on the spot. Madame Girot said it was a pleasure to fit such a figure. I hope she thinks so still! One day I could not refrain from accusing Perrette of unreasonable prejudice. "*Tenez, mademoiselle, you are English — both you and monsieur — though you dwell in Paris twenty, thirty years, yet you never arrive at knowing this kind! But for me, I know them as my pocket. Voilà — you shall wait — you shall see — I, Perrette, make no error.*"

In spite of my nationality, however, a time came when I began to have suspicions as to the disinterested friendship of the fascinating lady. For you do not need to be

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Parisian born to feel uneasy when a gay *My de-*
widow of a certain age takes out your rich *parted*
old uncle driving in the Bois (in his car- *aunt*
riage) three times a week, and dines with
him another three. And it is not reassuring
to perceive a choice bit of Sèvres missing one
day and a Fête Champêtre by Watteau
another, and to learn incidentally that *cette*
chère dame admired them so much it was a
real gratification when she condescended to
accept them !

But the most alarming symptom of all
was when *cette chère dame* took to visiting
the tomb of my departed aunt at Mont-
martre regularly every other Sunday. (My
uncle's days !) When I learnt that this
pious action had been her custom now for
some months past, a wreath of gorgeous
flowers on her arm, I knew that the matter
had become serious, and Perrette was justi-
fied in her worst suspicions. That wreath,
Perrette avowed, and she had seen it on two
occasions, could not have cost less than
twenty francs, and Madame de Bourgogne,
I could not but feel, was scarcely a person
to lay heedlessly twenty francs every other

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A snake in the grass Sunday on the grave of a woman she had never known. It was evident that Madame de Bourgogne was casting her bread upon the waters with a distinct intention of finding it again before many days. I felt helpless to avert the threatening danger to my poor uncle, for I was obliged to return to England, and could not possibly mount guard again till the autumn — five whole months, in which he might marry, die, and do any mortal folly besides. My only hope, and that but remote, lay in Perrette.

It was a dull day in November when I returned to a Paris as grey and saddened as London itself, but Perrette greeted me with a face like the rising sun.

I inquired whether she had come into a legacy.

“Ah, but still better! Mademoiselle will remember the anxiety supreme which we others who desire the good of monsieur were experiencing it is now some months past. That danger, the good God be thanked, is surmounted, and now that mademoiselle is arrived to watch over him

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also, me I can repose myself, I can sleep with *Perrette* to the eyes shut all the two, instead of like a *the rescue* cat, one ever at half open. I will recount to mademoiselle all that has passed. We have made our adieux to the lady of the *blonde chevelure*. We have left the *carte de visite*, *pour prendre congé*, — *Dieu soit beni!* Ah, but we have escaped there a danger the most grave! He has the heart so soft, my poor monsieur, — so simple, so guileless, — and he loves the compliment as the cat loves cream. *Voilà!* Ah, I know well that mademoiselle would say, and it is certainly true, that were monsieur to marry all the ladies of a *blonde chevelure* to whom he has presented his pictures, his porcelain, even his very shirt studs, there would be of them a veritable harem.” (N. B. — I had not intended saying anything of the sort, but let it pass.) “It was perhaps about two months past,” *Perrette* continued, “I had the occasion to pass through the Rue du Bac on the way to my cousin the tobacconist’s for some cigars of a quality rare he had obtained for monsieur. It was by a miracle I took that street, for it is out of the direct route; but

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Perrette to the rescue there, by the same miracle, I pass a small shop of antiquities. I lift the eyes, and in the corner of the window I behold the same Fête Champêtre of Watteau which that adventuress of the golden *chevelure* had filched from our poor monsieur. Is it, then, for nothing I have dusted him for ten years — this Watteau? True, the frame is another, but I am not deceived. In the left corner I behold again the little *amour* on the tree, who is the living portrait of my Justine.”

“But, Perrette,” I interrupted, as the robust figure of Justine rose before me protestingly, “Watteau painted so many Cupids; you might have easily deceived yourself.”

“I, Perrette, deceive myself! Not know again the portrait of my own child at two years old? Mademoiselle knows not; she is not yet a mother, *bien entendu!* Also, mark well this *amour*, he is the only one of the hair dark that this Monsieur Watteau has made. Do I not know? Have I not seen by monsieur, your uncle, a mass of such pictures and fans! *Bien!* let us continue then. ‘*Tien!*’ I say to myself, ‘Perrette, my woman, you have luck, here is

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your affair!’ I enter the shop, I make my *Perrette to*
inquiries. Monsieur Mosée likes not that *the rescue*
I question him. Certainly the picture is to
sell — it is doubtless a Watteau — if m’sieur
my master is so anxious to buy objects of
art let him come and ask questions for him-
self. ‘*Bien, monsieur, au revoir,*’ I reply, ‘but
I counsel you to sell not that picture till
my monsieur, who is a rich Englishman
of a remarkable insanity for buying old pic-
tures, has seen it.’ I make my adieux;
I hasten myself to return to the house.
When I relate to monsieur my little his-
tory he puts himself in an anger, but an
anger! It is good that I have the nerves
well seasoned. He enrages himself against
me, against Mosée, against my cousin,
M’sieur Hachette, but even against the
cigars, which all the same are of an excel-
lence not to be surpassed. *Enfin*, he de-
clares it is a lie, a perfidy, a *bêtise*. Do
I, Perrette, have the vanity to suppose I
know a Watteau? Madame de Bourgogne
would not part with that picture for all in
the world — she values it more than the
heirlooms of her family — she has legacied

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Perrette to the rescue it to mademoiselle his niece in her testament. '*Bien, monsieur,*' I say, 'for another time I guard the silence! When I see the Gobelin tapestry of m'sieur selling at the rag-fair on Saturday evening for ten sous, *voilà*, I have said it—I speak not!' Monsieur departs hastily. He likes not to remember the Gobelin—he gave it to madame, that vampire, the last time she dined here. Where he goes, what he accomplishes, I know not. It is mid-day when he goes out: it is midnight when he returns. The next morning monsieur says to me, brusquely, 'Perrette, you can pack my valise; I go to-night to Aix with Monsieur le Comte.' He confides to me then a small packet, sealed and carefully wrapped in paper, also his visiting card. 'Leave this to-morrow with the *concierge* of Madame de Bourgogne. Mount not to the apartment of madame,—chatter not with the *concierge*,' says monsieur, in a tone the most severe. 'Monsieur can place his confidence in me,' I reply with dignity, for I like not this tone of monsieur to me, Perrette, who have never deceived him—unless it were

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for his good. When monsieur has departed, very carefully I open a corner of the packet. ‘*Mon Dieu!*’ I cry; it is the little dark head of Justine that peeps out on me. But in the corner of monsieur’s visiting card I perceive three letters in writing of great decision: ‘P. P. C.’ ‘*Hein!*’ I tell myself, ‘that is well — very well,’ for by that sign I know we see the *blonde chevelure* no more. But I am desolated that she should possess again the Watteau.”

I congratulated Perrette heartily. Who knows how the situation might have developed had not my uncle received this hurt on his tenderest spot? Men are such simple souls where blond-haired women are concerned!

Perrette at all events has no doubt but that she saved him from a marriage of dire folly, fraught with the usual woful after-consequences, — arsenic for Uncle Jack and a rich and prosperous widowhood for the yellow-haired lady.

Not only in her capacity of cook, house-keeper, *garde malade*, *souffre-douleur*, and general adviser to Uncle Jack has Perrette

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Perrette shown herself a remarkable woman, but
père equally so in her own private relations of wife and mother.

That any of her property survives the exciting days of the lamented Monsieur Perrette is in itself a singular testimony to his wife's strength of character and powers of resource and stratagem. For money in the hands of Monsieur Perrette was as dew upon a thirsty land. His powers of absorption were stupendous, and Uncle Jack says his ability for scenting out the whereabouts of any negotiable coin was the only ability he ever manifested. Madame Perrette's watch over her spouse was unceasing, but there had been times, notwithstanding, when Hercule had adroitly managed to evade her and sneak off with slices of the family fortune, quieting his conscience with a promise to restore the same shortly in the alluring form of a large fortune in gold mines or diamond fields.

After a disaster of this kind Perrette never wasted her energy in reproaches; she redoubled her vigilance, that was all, and her husband's "business" friends realised

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one by one that they had madame to reckon *Perrette* with. *on guard*

"So soon as I heard any talk of *des affaires*, in that moment I knew there was a trap for my poor simple Hercule. He was like a child for innocence: he trusted in every rascal who met him in the street! He resembled exactly monsieur, your uncle!" says Perrette with a sigh.

"Has my uncle been confiding in any rascals recently?" I inquire, uneasily.

"Recently? *Hein!* Mademoiselle may well ask. Why it was but yesterday one of *ces messieurs* with velvet paws came crawling round here. He would see monsieur concerning *des affaires*. By that word I recognise him for a rascal. 'Monsieur is extremely suffering at this moment,' I say; 'he cannot give himself the pleasure of receiving visitors.' The *coquin*, nevertheless, insists it is of the last importance, this *affaire*. So I retire as though to confer with monsieur your uncle. I return and say, 'Monsieur regrets a thousand times. He suffers to that extent with a fluxion and an inflammation of the internal organs that he could not

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Promoters receive a priest for his last confession.' *non-plussed* The miserable one withdraws himself most unwillingly, leaving for monsieur a roll of papers thick as my arm. If I were to give these accursed papers to monsieur, the *omelette aux fines herbes* would become tough as a valise. I delay, therefore, to present the packet, and forget it" (here I grieve to say Perrette winked) "until next morning. Monsieur is furious, and tells me he has by this lost a chance to invest twenty thousand francs in a grand Balloon Company. I go into penitence, and thank *le bon Dieu* for my good day's work."

"But, Perrette," I venture to remonstrate, "supposing the papers had been very important, and the Balloon Company had turned out a great success."

"*Oh-la-la!* When mademoiselle has attained my age and my experience she will know then what to believe about companies, gold mines, card playing, *petits-cheveaux*, and the rest. 'Tis all the same, traps they are to catch those imbeciles the men. No woman is deceived by them. But there, the wisest of men, even such as monsieur,

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lack the courage to resist. And then, just *A gay dog* to hear them with that grand air of importance talking of their *affaires*. Do I not know? Have I not suffered? After my poor mother's death, my father, did he not eat up the entire fortune in less than one year? And my husband, *le malheureux*, would have done the same thing had I not kept the purse-strings with a firm hand. 'There, *mon ami*,' I would say, 'take thy ten francs; play with it, dissipate it as thou wilt, but remember, not another sou till next week.' And he knew I spoke but the truth. Ah, well! He had his defects, my poor Hercule, like all the men, but he was *bon garçon*, and of a gaiety to make a corpse laugh at his own interment."

Perrette brushed away a tear in memory of the departed Hercule, for whom she retained a most faithful affection in spite of his "defects."

.
But it is above all as a mother that Perrette stands out a monumental model to all mothers.

Through her own unaided exertions she

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Perrette has given Justine an excellent all-round
mère education, balancing judiciously the practical, intellectual, and religious elements. Added to this, she has bequeathed to her daughter her own comely appearance and a heritage of unfailing health and spirits.

With even-handed impartiality Perrette is wont to observe, "My Justine has the intelligence and prudence of her mother, and the good, gay heart of her father. *Le bon Dieu* has not done so badly for her."

But her mother's prudence and intelligence have not stopped short here, as in the case of so many parents this side the Channel. Since Justine's earliest childhood Madame Perrette has never failed to put by yearly for her daughter's *dot*, so that at the age of two-and-twenty Mademoiselle Justine was a young lady considered by all her acquaintances a most desirable *partie*.

Perrette has heard, with an incredulous shudder, of countries where marriage is left either to chance or to the unaided choice of the inexperienced young people themselves, whose parents not only take no thought for their daughters' *dots*, but with criminal im-

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prudence bring into the world colossal families for whom they can never hope to provide decently, and where, in consequence, scores of *dot*-less young women never marry at all. *British improvidence*

Perrette marvels at what she calls the callous indifference and stupid shortsightedness of these parents. "*Mon Dieu!* Have they then not more intelligence than the rabbits, those people there?" she asks with indignation.

In vain I try to impress upon Perrette that the English ideal is a far higher one, and the English marriage, in consequence, a shining example of what that admirable institution should be. She listens with quiet scorn, and then poses me with awkward questions, truthful answers to which would leave her so very much mistress of the situation that nothing is left but to have recourse to fencing, an art at which Madame Perrette is herself such an adept that she is not easily deceived by it. So, though still clinging to some of my illogical illusions, I have had to give up all idea of convincing Perrette. And specially is this the case since her re-

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Perrette match-making cent triumph in accomplishing an excellent marriage for Justine.

It came about in the approved French fashion.

A certain Madame Raoul, friend of Perrette's tobacconist cousin, Monsieur Hachette, mentioned one day to that gentleman that she was anxious to find a wife for her son Eugène. She must be a *démoiselle très bien élevée — très comme-il-faut* — possessing in the same moment all the domestic virtues and a nice little *dot, bien entendu*. Could her old friend assist her in this important selection? *Ce cher* Eugène on his side was an excellent boy, making the commerce and drawing a salary which every year promised a steady increase.

"My dear lady, I am enchanted to announce to you that I have her; she is there, your daughter-in-law!" And Monsieur Hachette presents the open empty palms of two fat, little, tobacco-stained hands to his astonished friend.

"*Mais, mon Dieu*, say then, where is she? Who is she?" asks madame, with eager interest.

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The result is that a meeting takes place shortly after between Madame Perrette and Madame Raoul, and on this proving satisfactory an introduction follows of Justine to her future mother-in-law, and lastly of the young couple to each other. *Justine's espousal*

All was done with due ceremony and dignity — no haste, yet no delay. Perrette told me she had detected from the first speech with Madame Raoul that she was a woman of sound head and heart ; the son of such a mother would, she felt sure, make a good husband for Justine.

Eugène himself confirmed this opinion, and he and Justine were highly satisfied with their respective mothers' choice.

"He has the heart full of goodness, has Eugène," Perrette assured me. "Like all men, he has without doubt run about and made his experiences ; but he desires now to marry and range himself. Justine will find in him a boy very reasonable."

The *soirée de contrat* was a grand affair. My uncle paid all expenses, and Perrette herself cooked the magnificent supper, with Justine's assistance. The day

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Nunc dimittis after came the religious ceremony of the Catholic Church.

The young people have now been married some months, and Eugène has ranged himself most satisfactorily.

His mother-in-law regards him with a prophetic eye, and predicts :

“He is a boy who will go far, very far !
One day he will certainly arrive !”

No praise from her lips could be higher, and it is clear to all observers that though she is not a whit less energetic and capable than before in her service to her master, Madame Perrette now regards her special mission in life as fulfilled.

LE P'TIT CHOU

A TIME-HONOURED custom of *L'enfant terrible* Uncle Jack's is the Sunday family dinner. The "family" consists of the Baronne d'Aville, her son, Gustave, her daughter and son-in-law, Thérèse and Louis Lefèbre, and last though least only in size, her granddaughter, Jacqueline, generally known as *le p'tit chou*. Madame d'Aville is our cousin, in what degree we have never quite unravelled; but of all cousins, English or French, she is *facile princeps* in our affection, by virtue of a nature as beneficent and cheering as the morning sun.

To all the members of this family my uncle is *l'oncle Jacques*, excepting to *le p'tit chou*, who, as his privileged godchild usually omits *l'oncle* and addresses him with brief familiarity as *mon Jackot*; in a wheedling mood, when heaven defend her victims, it is *mon bon p'tit Jackot* or *mon p'tit Jackot chéri*.

Le p'tit chou herself has names in great variety, such as *mon pigeon*, *mon amour*, *mon*

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A child of the world *ange, ma mignonne*, which are mostly applied when she least deserves them. To inquiring strangers she gives her name with great dignity as Mam'selle Jacqu'inemariehortenselefebvre.

She is a *chou* of pure Parisian growth. A stranger contrast to the wholesome rosy-cheeked little sprouts reared in English nurseries, it would be hard to find. Except when disporting herself under the trees of the Champs Elysées and when, eluding the vigilant eye of her Julie, she occasionally joins forces with some other *p'tit chou* in making gravel *pâtés*, this *p'tit chou* is always with her elders. She dines with them, drives with them, converses with them, and is consulted by them in the ordering both of her plans and theirs.

She has just completed four and a half years, but I know few people who have managed to get more experience and amusement into the time — especially when one considers how necessarily handicapped we all are for the first few months. She is as dainty and fragile looking as a Dresden china shepherdess, her small person beautifully finished off to the tips of her tiny fingers

LE P'TIT CHOU

and toes, and her pale, pointed little face *Untoward*
framed with fine silken curls and lit by lumi- *remarks*
nous dark eyes, by turns dancing with mischief
or reflecting the profoundest melancholy.

Jacqueline takes her place at dinner with the rest of the company, drinks her bumper of claret and water, clinking glasses and bowing to us in turn: *Vôte santé madame — Vôte santé m'sieu*, with the air of one who knows her *monde*.

She joins freely and unaffectedly in the conversation and is never at a loss in starting subjects on her own account, sometimes of a most embarrassing nature. My heart literally beats against the roof of my head when I catch the eye of the little *chou* fixed on me with a certain on-coming expression which experience has taught me to dread.

* “Me, I think at my Cousin Béty,” she will begin. “One has recounted to me something — Oh but something very interesting; I shall say it, yes? But no — for Papa he forbade me to recount it before

* The little *chou* speaks only French at present. I give a literal translation.

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Cupboard *les messieurs* — and unhappily there find
love themselves some here now."

An opening like this prepares one for the worst — and though my conscience be clear as the noonday I hold my breath till I know what the terrible infant has up her sleeve.

Jacqueline is always particularly brilliant after dinner, joining in the music and singing and treating us to marvellously agile performances which she calls *la dame au cirque*.

Her mother's singing she applauds with a patronising little air of ownership :

"Bravo ! *Encore ma p'tite maman ! Pas mal ça !* "

Sometimes a feeble attempt is made by one of the family to send her home with Julie, her faithful attendant and abject slave. But the remotest suggestion of departure is a call to arms. The little cabbage gathers together her forces, sure always of one ally.

"My Jackot, my poor, good little Jackot, thy Jacqueline will never leave thee — never, never — "

"But see now, be reasonable, *ma mignonne*, thou art fatigued, we promenaded ourselves long in the carriage this afternoon."

LE P'TIT CHOU

"But me, I am not fatigued," urges the little *chou*. "Look thou well in my eyes, thou wilt see. The Uncle Gustave, he said to Madame de l'Abbadie how one reads everything by looking well in the eyes, if one loves, if one deceives, all the things." And the artful *chou* climbs on his knee and taking the face of Uncle Jack between her tiny hands rubs her small kittenish nose against his and peers into his eyes. *The new diplomacy*

"I think from what I can see, her eyes are not as yet very sleepy," says Uncle Jack feebly, while the voice of Gustave is heard in eager protest to the rest of the party.

"Thou seest!" cries the triumphant *chou*. "Go, Julie, thou, and make no longer the imbecile — *tu m'agaces, vois tu.*"

Should any rash one press the matter further, the *p'tit chou* can develop the situation quickly into tragedy.

"Come, my little cabbage. Julie awaits thee, make thy good-byes." If there happens to be any show of decision in the tone, the little *chou* will thereupon lift up her dramatic voice in a cry of agonised despair. Twining her arms tightly round her Jackot's

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The new diplomacy neck till his face grows purple, she shrieks in his ear: "Save me, oh, save me, my good little Jackot — I have but thee!"

"There, there, there, be tranquil, my pigeon, my angel; weep not, my little cabbage."

But these terms of endearment are but a hollow mockery in the discerning ears of *le p'tit chou*, till she is assured they are not veiling the sinister design of "bed." She grows pathetic as the crisis subsides and points to the tears slowly trickling down her cheeks with melancholy satisfaction, "Seest thou how they flow — they flow."

This, as she rightly judges, always proves too much for her Jackot. *Voilà, voilà donc chérie, tu resteras avec ton Jacquot, ne pleurs plus,*" he implores.

After all, why should he conspire in banishing his fascinating guest from the party where she shines as chief ornament, merely because the hands of a dull old clock point to ten!

At his reassuring words a magical change takes place; the air clears, the sun comes out again, peace and harmony are restored,

LE P'TIT CHOU

and *le p'tit chou* is once more the brilliant *The cabbage garden* and fascinating Mam'selle Jacqueline.

This little drama is enacted weekly, with pleasing variations and the same invariable sequel.

Madame d'Aville has a small villa at Neuilly. Jacqueline and I passed a week together with her in June. It is an odd little bungalow place, all green and white, just made for the hot summer days, with a big veranda, and a garden in which lilacs, laburnums, and roses run riot. There are sad little broken statues peering between the trees and bushes, and a little fountain, long silent, which might strike a note of melancholy were it not for the joyous flowers which festoon everything as if for a fête.

Jacqueline is the only gardener ever seen at work there, and her labour is more energetic than beneficial. The poor flowers must feel as uncertain of the morrow as early Christians in the days of Nero. Now it is a border of smiling calceolarias dug up and marched off summarily, with mangled roots, to change places with a bed of

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*Le mot
interdit*

begonias. Another time the entire tribe of pansies are beheaded and used as an ornamental edging to the gravel path. Sometimes, by the same ruthless hand, the flowers are deluged with water all day in the blazing sun, the little *chou*, like a dripping mermaid, trotting to and fro with her water-can to the pump, muttering busily to herself, "*Faut bien que je travaille, moi.*"

Julie and Mouton, the terrier, from their shady seat under the mulberry tree, congratulate themselves on their temporary respite. However startling her proceedings, Julie never ventures to interfere with the gardener. While her grandmother only remarks blandly, if any special deed of destruction "jumps her in the eye," as she expresses it: "The poor little darling, it is well for her to occupy herself with the pursuits of the country!"

There is only one particular in which Jacqueline's absolute liberty of action or word is restricted, — one solitary item in her abundant vocabulary is forbidden, strictly forbidden. Needless to say, it possesses for her on this account a weird and irresistible fascination.

LE P'TIT CHOU

It is spoken of always as *le mot*. The *Le mot* longing to pronounce this forbidden word *interdit* is sometimes so uncontrollable that the little cabbage may be heard muttering it in an undertone, as she busies herself about the house or garden, furtively dipping the tips of her dainty fingers in the violet ink, picking the flowers to pieces, tearing up papers left heedlessly about, and swallowing anything that happens to be handy. "*Cochon, cochon*," she mutters, as though it were an incantation. Another time she will solemnly declare that Mouton, the dog, has spoken the forbidden word.

"Is wicked, the little Mouton!" This with an air of great concern.

"But why, darling? The little Mouton, really?"

"Has said the word!"

"Oh, but no! not possible, my little cabbage!"

"Oh, but yes! has said *cochon*, the ugly little Mouton!"

Round eyes of genuine horror, and an expression of such Madonna-like innocence,

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Le cabinet impossible to doubt the word of the little
noir cabbage.

Encouraged by her success, she then proceeds solemnly, piling up the agony :

“ Wicked little Mouton ! has said ‘ pig ’ to Mémé, to my cousin, to Julie, to all the world ! Must go in the black cupboard ! ”

This *cabinet noir*, a small anteroom with a blacker name than nature, is a fitting punishment for dogs and dolls maybe, but not for persons of the mature intelligence of Mam’selle Jacqueline.

On the last occasion of her sojourn there she came out, after some five minutes of ominous silence, with a sweet smile on her face, and remarked politely to her grandmother : “ Is nice, Mémé, the little black cupboard ; one reposes one’s self so well therein.”

.
Le p’tit chou is a person of very strong feelings. She adores or she detests. There is no lukewarm alternative.

For the first three days of my stay at Neuilly I was adored ; for the last three days, I say it with grief and humiliation, I

LE P'TIT CHOU

was detested. The change was the more *Jaundiced* painful as contrasted with our former terms *jealousy* of intimacy and affection.

We began by being inseparable. We shared our *petits pains* at breakfast. We played the piano together. We curled and undulated our hair with the same tongs. We powdered each other's cheeks, and specially each other's noses, with the same powder-puff. We drank from the same inebriating cup, and divided the cherries that grew on one stalk.

But presently a cloud of dark mistrust and jealousy sprang up on one side and marred the fair beauty of this friendship. It was Mémé, as we all call Madame d'Aville in imitation of the little *chou*, who in perfect innocence and good faith brought about the sad change.

Who does not know the bitterness and rancour felt for that aggravating person held up continually as a counsel of perfection. We wish him (or her) at Jericho. We long for his downfall: the very sound of his self-righteous name becomes an offence to us. But when it comes to having the odious

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Comparisons are odious pattern perpetually before our eyes, and seeing our own dearest Mémé lavish on this detested object the tenderest and most demonstrative affection, a milder person than *le p'tit chou* would be exasperated.

"But look then at thy cousin Betty. She does not so!"

This when you merely happen to be using your fingers instead of your fork.

Or, "*Fi donc, mon p'tit chou!* What will she then think of thee, thy cousin. See how she is shocked."

When you had but pushed away your plate remarking quite inoffensively that the food was *mauvais*, and Julie was imbecile for putting your plate again before you.

It was *ta cousine, ta cousine*, from morning till night. What wonder that the little cabbage pronounced at last in convinced tones:

"Don't like my cousin — is wicked — is ugly — go away — thou my cousin — go away."

Instead, however, of taking the hint to be gone, I stayed on to be held up daily and

LE P'TIT CHOU

hourly as a model, though a most unwilling one, of propriety and virtue. *Revenge is sweet*

Things reached a climax one evening. I had just finished playing a favourite nocturne of Mémé's. Most indiscreetly the latter came up, and stroking my hair kissed me gently on the forehead. I put my hand on hers. It was grabbed away roughly by another hand, very tiny, but of no uncertain touch, while a small defiant face looked up viciously into mine, hurling in a savage whisper the word, "*Cochon!*"

"*Oh-la-la!* What sayest thou then!" cried Mémé in accents of consternation.

"*Cochon! Cochon!*" repeated Jacqueline in a low but terribly distinct voice, fully conscious of the enormity of her crime, but with no wavering towards repentance.

In vain I tried by a gentle answer to turn away wrath.

"But Jacqueline is sorry; she will be good now, is it not so?" I said conciliatingly.

The little *chou* looked at me scornfully.

"No — me I am not good — have said the word. Yes, I have said it to my cousin. *Cochon! Cochon!*" she repeated exultingly.

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Vocabu-
laric gra-
dations

What to do ! Mémé was in despair. For, Jacqueline being in her charge, she felt responsible for her morals.

Let no one imagine that the English word "pig" in any way renders the French translation as set down in the dictionary. No doubt there is an English equivalent for *le mot*, but I have never been able to arrive at it. I have suggested numerous epithets, that are generally supposed to be very unladylike, such as hog, ass, fool, cur, brute, limb, even devil ; but Mémé assures me that all put together, they are simply not in it with *le mot*.

A friend of Mémé's belonging to the *crème de la crème* of French society came to call one day with her small boy, a queer little being with hair cut *en brosse*, a very big lace collar and enormous bow under his chin.

For a time all went well, Jacqueline and Alphonse sat in the long grass making daisy chains for Mouton's neck, and absorbed in such deep converse, that Mémé was tempted to inquire the subject of their discourse. "We recount to each other our past lives,"

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replied *le p'tit chou*. The two small heads *A bolt* went closer together, and the tone became *from the* more confidential. Then suddenly like a *blue* bolt out of the blue came *le mot*.

The boy rushed up to his mother. "Didst thou hear what she said, didst thou hear it well?" he asked, his eyes round with outraged propriety. His mother had heard, we had all heard, alas! though poor Mémé, trying to pretend we had not, with a sudden gust of animation was renewing the flagging talk.

Alphonse in a loud hissing whisper repeated the unspeakable word: "*Cochon*, she said *cochon* to me!"

Madame la Comtesse rose, taking her blameless boy by the hand. "Be silent, my child. It is forbidden to thee to repeat such a word." Then to Mémé: "Dear friend, I should advise you to send away your *bonne*; she must be a person very indiscreet with children. A thousand thanks, but it is time that I save myself. Come, Alphonse, make thy good-byes."

Poor Mémé, covered with confusion, apologised for her granddaughter, saying

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The scape goat she had been learning a little English, and of course in that language words had such a different significance, etc., etc.

“I fear, dear friend, the English tongue must be a most indelicate one and little suitable for a young French lady of good society,” observed Madame la Comtesse, sailing away with her now weeping son, and leaving Mémé to the reflection that a “darn is worse than a hole.”

The young miscreant had disappeared. “She has gone into penitence,” said Mémé. I went in search of her, considerable doubt possessing me as to the little *chou’s* holy frame of mind.

I found her pouring her grievances into the sympathetic ear of Mouton. She saw me, but continued as though I were not there. “Yes, my poor Mouton, the chain was for thee and he broke it, the miserable one, because it was longer than his and much more beautiful. It is well finished with that *coquain*, that little *co*—thou knowest the *mot*, my little treasure.”

“Jacqueline,” I interrupted sternly, “Alphonse has gone—his mother, poor lady,

LE P'TIT CHOU

was so shocked. He was very sad, he *Le grand*
cried big tears." *passion*

"*À la bonheur* if he cried big tears," said the little cabbage curtly. "I love him no more the little Alphonse. It was by feebleness only that I consented to marry him — *Dieu merci*, it is finished! I will have a *fiancé* much better than him!"

"No one will have thee for a *fiancée*," I observed, "if thou sayest *le mot*. It is too shocking, seest thou?"

Le p'tit chou tossed back her silk curls defiantly. "If one loves with a grand passion it makes nothing those little stupidities there. For me I will be loved with a grand passion, seest thou? Lastly, 'with a good *dot* all marches,' it was Madame de Bretelle who said it."

I felt helpless enough, but solemnised my face sufficiently to say, "Well, Jacqueline, unless you try to be a good child you will have no *dot* and no *fiancé* and no *petits fours* for your *gouté*. Now say no more follies, but come and tell poor Mémé you are sorry for making her sad."

"Well, I will embrace my Mémé," she

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Manners conceded; "but know thou I will have a
and morals grand *dot*, oh, a grand *dot*." The little cabbage opened wide arms as though to embrace the universe. "It is my good little Jackot who has promised me. Recount to me now the story of the wicked Vénus and the good Élizabeth. They please much thy stories — with that one forgets all one's *ennuis*."

This is a regular device practised by the artful *chou* when things are beginning to take an unpleasant turn. But what can I do? The stern resolve of Mémé to punish her would, I knew, collapse at the first sight of the returning prodigal. There she sat in fact awaiting us, arms outstretched in welcome long before she knew whether her granddaughter's heart even inclined towards repentance. All I could do was to improve the occasion by telling the story, not of the fascinating Vénus, but of that sad, bad girl whose wicked words turned to toads and vipers as they left her mouth, while the words of her good sister became rubies and pearls with which she enriched her parents and all her friends.

LE P'TIT CHOU

"And for herself she had also a good *La gaie dot!*" observed the *p'tit chou* thoughtfully *Parisienne* as we entered the house hand in hand.

Jacqueline has a great weakness, or rather a great passion — (there is no weakness in *le p'tit chou*), — for dress. Pink is her favourite colour, the brighter the better. She turns with scorn and loathing from the wearer of browns and drabs.

"Me I love no longer *ma c'sine!* She is hideous, the costume of *ma c'sine!*" she remarked of me one day while our friendship was still in full bloom.

I wore the detested *écru* colour! But when I appeared in a blouse of pink *mousseline de soie*, the little cabbage clapped her hands with delight and ran to greet me, approvingly.

"Oh, the beautiful costume! She is nice, *ma p'tite c'sine* Béty."

Naturally enough she is as particular about her own toilet as that of her friends, and many dramatic, moving scenes take place when it comes to the question of what Mam'selle Jacqueline is to put on in the morning.

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La gaie Parisienne " *Est sale ! . . . est mauvaise . . . est vilaine, la robe de Jacqu'ine !*" Disgust and misery on her small face, she held out the skirts of the offending garment, more useful it must be owned than ornamental. But when an hour later some hats arrived from the *Trois Quartiers* for *le p'tit chou* to try on, she was in transports of delight.

"Oh, madame, *qu'il est beau ! qu'il est beau !*" she cried, fixing at once on a fine pink bonnet out of which her small face peered as from the centre of a full-blown rose.

"See here the beautiful hat ! How he goes well ! Is he *chic* — say then —" Perching it on her tiny head, she showed off its beauties in perfect imitation of one of Madame Rebeau's young ladies.

Let no one imagine that *le p'tit chou's* love of dress arises from any such paltry feeling as feminine vanity.

Hers is a genuine worship of the beautiful. Colour specially appeals to her little artistic soul. Whether a dress or a flower she will stand entranced before it, stroke and kiss it tenderly.

LE P'TIT CHOU

"*Oh, les belles choses ! Les belles choses !*" "*Les belles choses*" she exclaims with the fervour of an old-world Greek. And in her prayer morning and evening to *Le petit Jésus*, after asking for a blessing on *maman, papa, Mémé, Julie, Mouton, ma c'sine, et tout le monde*, she never fails to add with special fervour *et toutes les belles choses.*"

.

Some months elapsed after our visit to Neuilly before we met again, *le p'tit chou* and I. She greeted me cordially, and my small offering of an industrious tin "sweeper" was most graciously accepted. Jock, my little Scotch terrier, a new acquisition, came in barking and scampering with important fussiness. I hastened to introduce him to *le p'tit chou*. "Is n't he nice? He is my good little dog. Stroke his silk jacket," I said.

Jock sniffed inquisitively at the moving toy. Jacqueline snatched it up. "*Va t'en, méchant,*" she growled. "Me I like not much the dogs — *chez nous*, we have a little *bébé*," she announced in a superior tone. "In an interior it goes much better than a

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Pups and dog! And thou? Hast thou a bébé chez
babes toi?"*

"No, me I have only a dog," I answered meekly, confessing my shortcomings. "But recount to me of your dear little *bébé*."

"Oh, it is no great thing!" Jacqueline shrugged her shoulders deprecatingly. "It is Madame Latoix our merchant of cabbages in Avenue Courcelles who is the culpable. Figure to thyself, the imbecile, she sent a little sister when *maman* and me also we told her very precisely it was a little brother we required. Bah! It is a woman *embêtante*, Madame Latoix!"

"Did you make your complaint to her?" I asked.

"I should well think so! I scolded her strongly. Papa he said, 'We will command a boy also,' but *maman* she said, '*Dieu merci*, no more children for all in the world!'"

"Well, two of you is a very nice number, is it not?" I remarked.

"Knowest thou?" and the little *chou* nodded her head impressively, "the other day it was, the sister of the *concierge* she had

LE P'TIT CHOU

three babies who by an error arrived all in *A trying*
the same moment!" *problem*

I laughed. The little *chou* thought she detected incredulity in the sound.

"But it is true, true," she affirmed. "Julie will tell it thee, the same thing. Figure to thyself, if Madame Latoix had sent to us three *bébés* instead of one! What to do! For the unhappy ones they cannot even eat their dinner knowest thou? It appears they arrive first without the teeth—not even one! It is necessary to suckle them like the little cow at the farm where lives Julie's brother! How then to nourish them? Me I have no milk—for the moment. Papa he has none; Julie also has none, and *maman* has but for two!"

"It is certainly very fortunate that you had only one baby," I rejoined sympathetically. "Can she talk yet, your little sister?"

"But no! But no!—the miserable one she can only cry. My faith but it is an ennui that *bébé*!—To hear crying, crying, all the time for no cause in the world! It fatigues the ears."

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Miracles "Oh, she will soon leave that bad habit,"
of memory I said. "I remember when you too could
only cry and speak no word."

But this reminiscence was evidently not at all welcome; the *p'tit chou* regarded me vindictively for a minute and then announced firmly, "And thou also! Me I remember when thou wert a little *bébé*, quite little and ugly, but of an ugliness to make fear! And thou didst cry and make all the day *un tapage affreux, mon Dieu*, but, yes,—true that!"

Unless some wonderful transformation takes place, a thing always possible with the dramatic temperament, I am afraid that *bébé* will have but a poor time of it with her sister, *le p'tit chou*.

A FRENCH MARRIAGE

MADEMOISELLE SUSANNE DERODE was married the other day. We were all at the wedding, I in the capacity of *demoiselle d'honneur*, Gustave that of *garçon d'honneur*, and *le p'tit chou* as one of the small "Flora" who paved the path of the bride with rosebuds. Madame Derode and her sister Madame de Bretelle are old friends both of Uncle Jack and the d'Avilles, and for years past we have all taken a lively interest in the "heart affairs" of "Suzette."

Le mariage à la mode

Uncle Jack at one time wished to make a match between Gustave and Susanne, but Gustave waved the project aside, protesting he was much too young to marry, and range himself—it would be an iniquity for a child such as he—not having yet sounded his thirty years for example, to put on his colt's back the load of married responsibility. His devoted mother being only too willing to encourage views which kept him still with

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Le flirt anglais her, *l'oncle Jacques* had to renounce his pet scheme.

Gustave meanwhile declared that before launching himself on the ocean he would fain essay his little bark in the shallows of that charming and seductive back water *le flirt anglais*, with me at the helm. "Thing excellent, *le flirt*," said Gustave, "without danger or compromise, yet diverting and instructive; is it not so, my cousin?"

"That depends on the man at the helm," I answered warningly.

"Mind you stick to the back water, sir," said Uncle Jack, who does n't approve of mixed marriages.

From *le p'tit chou's* quotation of *l'oncle* Gustave's conversation the other day with the fair Madame de l'Abbadie on the subject of eyes, I am inclined to think he is in no need of tuition in any branch of the subtle art, but rather of a few words of caution.

But to return to our *mouton*, or rather our lamb.

Mademoiselle Susanne is a young lady, possessing *chic*, *esprit*, *cachet*, and all those subtle charms which especially distinguish

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the young Parisian. She is an only daughter, and shares with Edouard, a brother some years younger, the adoration of her devoted parents. From her earliest childhood they have been building up Suzette's *dot*, till, considering their modest income, it has grown into quite a respectable pile. This, it is but due to her mother to say, has been chiefly her work, the real business capacity being more developed in madame than monsieur, as is so frequently the case in France. *The almighty "dot"*

Susanne's *dot* provided, her marriage became the pivot round which the parents' every thought and action revolved. Not that they were in a hurry to make it an accomplished fact, Monsieur Derode readily agreeing with both his wife and daughter that a marriage before the twenties was most undesirable.

"At that age there the character is not posed," says Madame Derode. "By consequence, the man who pleases you at nineteen will cause you a mortal *ennui* at twenty-five."

"Neither is the constitution posed,"

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The marriage business declares Susanne. "At the class of physiology one learns that it is better for both the mother and the child that the mother be not too young."

But though Madame Derode deferred it, she never for one day lost sight of the purpose before her. Her daughter's future was to her just as serious and important a responsibility as to English parents is the future of their sons.

There may be an equivalent in French for the English saying, "Marriages are made in Heaven," but one thing is certain, no good French parent ever dreams of acting upon it. French marriages are very carefully prepared, arranged, and carried out on earth; and though the blessing of Heaven may be sincerely sought, French parents are convinced that if the thing is to be done properly they must undertake it themselves. Leaving the matter in the inexperienced hands of the young people, they regard as an even greater lapse of duty and violation of common-sense than shifting the business on to the shoulders of Heaven.

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Susanne was regarded as a very desirable little *partie*, both by careful mothers on the lookout for their sons, and also by the sons themselves; her *jolie dot* and her *jolie personne* combining with youth, good birth, and charming manners to attract a large following. But she reached the age of four-and-twenty before her mother said decisively, "The moment has arrived; our Suzette must marry." Up to this Susanne had looked with indifference or amusement on those *prétendants* who had come forward. Neither her heart nor her imagination had been touched ever so lightly. She awaited marriage as her inevitable destiny, and could not have conceived a normal life under any other conditions; but she was fastidious, and added a fresh virtue every day to the list of requirements in her *futur*. *Matri-
monial
qualifica-
tions*

Her aunt, Madame de Bretelle, became seriously anxious about her. "Girls who go on in that fashion, finish badly," she warned Susanne. To Uncle Jack, who ever lends a sympathetic ear to a pretty woman, she poured out her troubles.

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My gallant uncle "Suzette will become so difficult there will be nothing left but to make her to enter a convent," she sighed. "I am in the despair about that child."

"To avert such a disaster, dear lady, why do you not occupy yourself with our dear little Suzette?" he replied. "In hands so capable she cannot fail to come out well."

Madame de Bretelle raised her "capable" and exceedingly well-gloved little hands deprecatingly.

"*Mon Dieu!* do you think then that me I do not occupy myself of her? Since the marriage so happy of my little Henriette to Monsieur de l'Abbadie I think of nothing but our Suzette. Dear friend, if they were but a family reasonable, see you! I have done all my possible, for to fulfil one's duty, that is why one continues to live here below when the youth is past, is it not so?" The gay little Parisian twinkled wickedly at her own sententious remark.

"You stay to be the joy of your friends; that is your duty supreme," replied her gallant old friend.

"The other day I go to my sister," con-

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tinued Madame de Bretelle, with a sigh. *A dis-qualified candidate*
“‘Listen,’ I say to her, ‘I come to thee with a demand in marriage for thy dear child to make crack with jealousy half the good mothers in Paris. Here is my friend, Monsieur le Général de Lille, who has his nephew to marry; he is just your affair, a boy rich and solid, occupying a handsome position in the Administration, of an age very suitable, environing the thirty-five. Man of the world, has without doubt made his experiences, but for the rest he desires now to marry and range himself. May I bring him with his uncle to make his court on your next Wednesday?’ Think you my sister enthuses herself, as would any other mother reasonable and prudent? ‘*Du tout, du tout*, to make you pleasure I will consent to receive this gentleman,’ she answers me, with an air indifferent; ‘but before considering him as a *prétendant* for Susanne, I must know something of his past. It does not please me, a man who has made much experience!’ ‘Oh, for that, *ma pauvre chérie*,’ I say, ‘seek not to wake the cat who sleeps. Look into no man’s life, or

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*Past,
present,
and
future*

adieu to all repose.' The Wednesday following behold us all arrived at the reception of my sister. Our Suzette is charmed with Monsieur Léon de Lille; he, in his turn, declares to his uncle that he is already enamoured to the folly! All marches at a marvel, when piff! paff! the affair is finished, the poor de Lille is sent promenading—and why, just heaven! It is an excellent boy, well spread in society, good character, et cetera, et cetera; but my sister, having the unhappy idea to burrow in his escapades of past times, discovers there has certainly existed a past—several pasts, perhaps! For me, I find we have enough with the present. The future one must leave to *le bon Dieu*, the past one should confide to the priest; is it not so, dear friend? But my poor sister, she will not of my counsels, she obstinates herself; she replies to me, 'If I engage a *bonne*, a *chef*, do I not make the enquiries on their account? Shall I make less for the husband of my daughter?' Imbecility pure, it appears to me! Behold me now, embroiled with my ancient friend, mister the

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General, who puts himself in an anger *The successful match-maker* atrocious, though certainly excusable, for all his family have the temperament choleric, that which makes also the false digestion. I ask you a little am I not to pity, me?"

Uncle Jack's face wore a quizzical, tolerant expression entirely non-committal. The words in which he answered would have done service just as well had he listened to Madame Derode's version of the affair.

"Courage, courage, dear lady. Remind yourself of your successes so numerous, of the fine marriage of your Henriette! Be not discouraged for one little failure; with we others, all life is failure and success the exception, for you it is the rule. For the General, his annoyance will pass, he adores you even as I myself, and naturally desired the alliance. We will make a party and dine at Suresnes the Sunday next — agreed? Then I shall engage the General and our dear d'Avilles at once."

"Ah, flatterer! but you are irresistible. You say what is not true, but one likes to hear it all the same; *ça soulage!*"

And Madame de Bretelle rustled off to

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My sympathetic ideas her carriage, cheered and fortified to begin another campaign for her niece.

About a week later I was calling on Madame Derode when Madame de Bretelle was announced. Susanne was out, and they began at once to discuss the burning topic of the day — the *prétendants* of that young person, begging me to remain and give my advice on the subject.

“The English ideas are to me so sympathetic, and our dear young friend has so much heart,” said Madame Derode, pressing my hand in hers.

“I fear it is not only a large heart, but a head of Minerva for wisdom and discernment, which is needed in these affairs,” I rejoined, diplomatically.

“*Brava!* There is what is well said, my *chérie*,” cried Madame de Bretelle, appropriating my other hand and ranging me at once on her side of the field. “Now, my sister, recount to us who is there on the carpet since thou gavest the *congé* to that charming boy, Léon de Lille. Ah, but it tears me the heart only to think of it! I would have

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offered him to our dear little¹ Betty. The *Madame's* General de Lille has approached me on the *philosophy* subject lately, but with Monsieur Mortimère I knew the affair was finished from the moment he should learn you had rejected the poor boy for your Suzette — *voilà des misères*. Ah, but he was charming, that Monsieur de Lille, with that air of melancholy and mystery, and that voice so tender — ”

“Which at the same time said nothing but ‘It makes fine weather,’ ” interrupted her sister. “Not much place in his heart would my Suzette have found. And very surely our dear Monsieur Mortimère would be of my advice ; is it not so, my Betty ? ”

I agreed emphatically.

“*Ma foi !* ” Madame de Bretelle shrugged her shoulders. “There are some who insist on placing the foot on the tail of the sleeping cat, others who make a little *détour* and so avoid the scratch.”

“No doubt I am ‘old game’ (*vieux jeu*), but me, I object to a cat who lies across the

¹ “Little” and “young,” both terms of endearment, and applied quite indiscriminately.

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The young threshold of the bride and laps up the cream
Idea that should be hers !”

“Thou art impossible, *ma mie* ! Now forward with the pretenders !”

“Well, *ma chère*, I must tell you I have two of them under consideration in this moment. I have come to no decision. Suzette, I fear, inclines to the less advantageous. She is convinced he has the heart excellent, and declares that in his head there are brains, while for the rest of the men they have nothing but the wadding.”

“*Mon Dieu* ! but to possess those ideas there is a real misfortune for a young girl ! *Ma pauvre chérie*, but they are ideas quite *bourgeoises* ! Had my Henriette thought thus she had never made that handsome marriage which so rejoiced me the heart.” (N. B. The Marquis de l’Abbadie was sixty and weighed sixteen stone.) “You must reason with her. After all, it is the parents to make the choice ; is it not so, *ma chère petite Bétty* ?” she turned to me.

I answered that the idea was not an established one in England, but I thought there was much to be said for it, especially if the

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parents, on discovering they had chosen *In the*
badly, were prepared to rectify it. *Scales*

"Ah, *fi donc*, do not mock yourself of me!" the little lady fixed me with her gold double-barrel eyeglasses. I eagerly disclaimed any idea of mockery on a subject so appallingly serious.

"Well," continued her sister, "who now are they, these *prétendants*?"

"Oh, they are both worth considering." Madame Derode's tone was a little piqued. "The one is Monsieur Eugène Lemaire. He is very well—very well indeed—a young lawyer of much talent and originality. It appears he saw Suzette at the *Trocadéro* concert with the de Saussures and became madly enamoured of her *sur le champs*, Madame Deschamps, his cousin, undertook to approach me on his behalf. He has not much fortune, however, and Suzette's *dot* would perhaps require augmenting."

"*Oh-la-la!* We want none of him then." Madame de Bretelle dismissed him with a wave of her plump little hands. "And the other?"

"The other is Monsieur le Vicomte de

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Suzette la Motte — a widower — rich, of a certain
has notions age, but well preserved — the manners perfect — a fine property in the Auvergnés — a charming little hotel in the Champs Elysées. A man also of excellent heart, he adores Suzette, it appears, though he has seen her but once. Henri, *le pauvre vieux*, inclines much towards him for a son-in-law."

"And Henri he has reason, *sac à papier* ! But is it possible you can hesitate? Say, then, thou art not ravished? Thou art not enchanted with such a marriage for the child? What more wouldst thou?"

"The position of a mother, my well-loved sister, is, as thou knowest, of a difficulty — but of a delicacy ! Suzette has her ideas. She declares that this poor Monsieur de la Motte he is of a too great corpulence. She and Edouard, the *gamin*, are convinced he thinks chiefly of a good dinner ! It is certainly his only defect — he is full of heart."

"His only defect? But it is a virtue that ! a grace ! Every woman should rejoice when her husband shows a sincere passion for his dinner ; it is the greatest safety

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valve ! Ah, *ma sœur chérie*, one must not *The Philosophy of Life* listen to the folly of young people ; they will take one by the nose and lead one to perdition."

"Oh, Suzette is not unreasonable altogether, but her happiness is the object supreme that I seek." The harassed mother sighed.

"Happiness, *ma pauvre chatte*, is ultimately a question of character ; *du reste*, he flies ever from the one who seeks him ! Me, I know life. *Hélas*, I know men also ! The perfect happiness is given to none but those who have no desires, such as our cousin Hélène, a devotee immured in a convent. The woman's greatest joy comes to her through her child. Do not expect too much from the husband. If he is indulgent, complacent, good heart, thank heaven ; but, *de grace !* encourage not these romantic desires for a Paul and Virginie emotion. *À quoi bon, mon Dieu !* It endures but for a little moment, and then — Well, *au revoir, ma belle¹ petite amie*. Digest

¹ *Belle*, an adjective used in the same unmerited manner as *jeune* and *petite*.

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The lawyer wins well my counsels and let me find for you a good husband. *Au revoir, ma sœur*, I shall pray to *le bon Dieu* for the success of Monsieur de la Motte."

Three weeks later, *chez* Madame de Brettelle, in the Avenue Wagram, the charming little boudoir in Empire style, a perfect setting to the hostess in her dainty laces and soft foulard, we met again.

Madame Derode having begged me to go and support her as she broke the important news that the *faire-parts* were ordered announcing Suzette's approaching nuptials with Monsieur Eugène Lemaire. On our way there Madame Derode acknowledged there had been a moment in which Monsieur Léon de Lille with his *air du monde* and an insinuating charm of manner had threatened to prove a dangerous rival. But his courtship had failed to lead him into harbour, in spite of his laudable intention to try domestic felicity. The fact was, the secret investigations undertaken by a sphinx-like gentleman (whom many a Monsieur Léon would like to see removed to a better world) had proved

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anything but satisfactory to the anxious *Henri* mother of Suzette. *angelic*

The stout Vicomte had also received his *cong  *, Mademoiselle Suzette declaring she would prefer to make herself *religieuse*.

"*Mon Dieu!* when you had such offers as de la Motte and de Lille!" commented Madame de Bretelle. "Just heaven, what folly! Well, I pardon thee not, but all the same I must embrace thee."

"Henri, *le pauvre vieux*, has consented to make a sacrifice since it is to insure the happiness of our child. We must take a smaller *appartement!* Madame Deschamps informs us that later Monsieur Lemaire will inherit from his aunt. At present, as he assists his widow mother he cannot marry a girl who brings less than — well, we must add another thirty thousand francs to the *dot*. Henri has behaved as an angel of goodness and generosity."

"You have both behaved as imbeciles, my dear Louise; there is all that is to be said. You will now live like rats in some unhappy hole and dress like the notary's wife! *Oh-la-la!* One knows not where

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A mother of nine it will finish. They will at least be prudent, I hope, and regulate their family according to their income."

"Oh, *ma chère*, on that point there is nothing to fear. They possess both of them the prudence and the good sense."

"Not like our friends the Percy Joneses, *hein?* Have you heard that poor lady has just brought the number nine into the world? Six daughters, and unable to provide a *dot* for even one! But the Reverend Monsieur Jones deranges himself not at all. He greeted me yesterday with the air of a Rothschild who announces the birth of an heir long desired! A strange people those English! My dear little friend here is as one of us, so I speak with frankness my ideas, and trust she will follow well my counsels, notwithstanding that she is *une Anglaise*. For thee, my Louise, I could believe that thou hadst a drop of the English blood in the veins, so badly hast thou managed this marriage."

"Ah, but no, for me had I been *une Anglaise* (in many ways a gain supreme) the marriage would certainly not have arranged

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itself at all, *voilà tout !* Instead of one, the *Le chat* treasure, I should have had probably six, *qui dort* seven, the good God alone knows how many, sons to send to college, and my Suzette would have been without the *dot*. But wait till you have seen Eugène, you will forgive me. He adores Suzette. His bouquets to her every day are full of sentiment, subtle and delicate. He has presented her with a delicious little book on the language of flowers as a key to all he would say. Suzette is enchanted. She believes he will be President of the Republic, he has such a noble head. In his profession they say he has a great future. It will suit my little Suzette well to preside in her salon."

"Ah, behold you again on the voyage of sentiment, *ma pauvre chérie*. Forget not that a chicken in the pot is worth more than a goose on the wing. And say then, in this case do you imagine there is no *chat qui dort ?* "

"On that point, rest assured, I have satisfied myself. But yes, *ma bonne chérie*, it appears to me no one should take that precaution there—at least," she added, and I

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Soirée de Contrat knew she was thinking of the eventful past of the Marquis de l'Abbadie, "with a girl of the temperament of Suzette — all are not constructed in the same fashion."

"My faith, I hope not ! Well, my sister, if every one had your strange ideas, the choice of husbands would indeed be restricted ; the world would overflow with old maids and nuns. Not too gay that ! For me, I believe in no man, not even your whitewashed Monsieur Lemaire. I have taken him *en grippe* ; nothing so detestable as a man whose prosperity is all future."

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Nevertheless, at the *soirée de contrat* (the signing of the contract), I heard Madame de Bretelle expatiating with enthusiasm to all the company on the extraordinary merits and talents of her sister's son-in-law elect. The quick ears of Suzette, receiving the arriving guests with her mother and *fiancé*, tingled with pleasure. The verdict of *la tante Hortense* counts with her more than she cares to own. But whether the good looks and frank pleasant manner of the bridegroom have combined to thaw

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the prejudice of Madame de Bretelle, or *Left-handed compliments* whether she is merely acting on the wise principle of crying up all family property, including even an unprofitable acquisition, I do not know.

We all approved of the *fiancé*, loudly and to his face. Suzette appealed to me as to whether he was not very English.

“Say then do you not find he resembles absolutely to an Englishman? He has the air, is it not so, of making well *le sport* and *la chasse*. ‘The eye clear and frank; the colour fresh!’”

Eugène stood there for my inspection, heels together like a soldier called to attention. Fortunately my countrymen offer such a variety of type, I could truthfully say he might very well be an Englishman.

I find this is often taken as a compliment by Frenchmen, as the face of Eugène testified on this occasion. But I know of no Englishman who would enjoy being told by his bride that he looked just like a Frenchman, or the living image, say, of a German! I must not forget to add though, that I fear no French woman would be gratified if

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The ideal her *fiancé* said she resembled *une Anglaise*,
hostess unless she were on horseback. I am constantly told by the friends who desire to say the prettiest thing they can, that I am *tout à fait française* — *mais tout à fait Parisienne*. A statement of doubtful veracity, but I see they mean it kindly, so pocket my national pride.

The *soirée* was a great success. A distinguished *sociétaire* of the Français recited some of his inimitable monologues, a young *chanteuse* of the Opera Comique entertained us with impassioned Spanish love songs *à la mode*, and a dancer whose beauty and grace have set all Paris aflame gave us weird Eastern dances to still weirder music.

Every one had the air of enjoying himself, and that I believe goes a long way towards producing the sensation. Also three depressing elements often to be observed on our side of the channel were absent: there was no stiffness, people even ventured to speak to each other without having been introduced; there were no wall flowers, such being instantly rooted up and set blooming in the midst of the gay *parterre*; and, lastly,

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no select groups of superior young men, *Our in-*
standing in doorways one foot on the stairs, *sular dull-*
so to speak, ready to escape if any one *ness*
ventures to disturb their critical reflections.

Madame d'Aville declares that why people suffer less from dullness in France is because women make the society laws, and French women, being born hostesses, possess just that combination of instinct and art which results in giving all their guests a pleasant time. She says it is incredible that women can have been the originators of society customs in England, — at least, if they were, Mémé has no words to express how poorly she thinks of those ladies. There is one custom which especially calls forth her ire.

“In no civilised country save the Great Britain, the great stupid Britain,” says Mémé, “do you find the men and the women of society assemble themselves for a dinner together and finish by passing a great part of the evening in separate *salons*. You cut the thread just as it commences to unwind, you throw a cold *douche* just as the atmosphere, glacial as the pole of the north by

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*The
Speaker's
eye*

you English, has begun to thaw. In the moment when every one chatters and the gaiety spreads, your hostess the *maladroite* raises the eyebrows — a sign masonic, upon which there is a rustle as of birds in flight, and suddenly all is finished! *Mais, mon Dieu*, what idea barbaric have you there, you other English? You think to please the men? Me I tell you that if those gentlemen are well placed, and a good hostess will place all well, you please them not. You think to please the women? My faith, you English women! Is it that you have too much of vanity, or is it that you have of it not enough? Do you know then that during that bad three-quarters of an hour while you sit yawning in the salon, the man you had commenced to charm, he drinks the champagne, the port wine, recounts his histories and forgets you. *Mon Dieu*, yes; what I say there it is true. You tell yourself he thinks of you still, he will return. But no — but no. In the most cases the thread is broken and one mends it not. For the women, if they are intelligent, they commence to interest themselves in one another, and in

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that event see you they are not ready to *Corbeille* turn and make conversation anew with those *de mariage* gentlemen who tardily reappear. Me I have well remarked this many times in England how it results in all having the air of being oppressed with a mortal ennui. The moment of departure appears for every one the most happy."

Mémé says a great deal more of a depressing nature on the subject of English women, but I think it is wiser to stop here and return to Suzette's wedding.

We inspected the presents, and above all the *corbeille de mariage*, which, as the gift of the *fiancé*, is, of course, of special interest.

"How entrancing!" "What a love!" "But it is altogether ravishing!" etc., were the flattering exclamations, while the proud bride showed off her treasures to an admiring group of her most cherished friends; but no sooner was her back turned than the contents of the *corbeille* underwent a severe and scathing criticism.

"This lace seest thou? I do not believe it to be real Valenciennes, but no! The poor Suzette she deceives herself finely."

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The Price of Pearls The lace flounces which were "altogether ravishing" are examined and found wanting. The collar of an opera cloak is not "last cry," the tortoise-shell ostrich feather fan is *démodé*. The string of pearls are proclaimed *pas mal*; but Suzette's cousin, the young Marquise de l'Abbadie, reminds us that her rope of pearls was three times that length and the pearls twice that size.

"My faith! yes, and the years of her *fiancé* they also were three times the length of our Lemaire, and his weight more than double," whispers a mischievous little bridesmaid in my ear.

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The wedding ceremony took place two days later at St. Philippe du Roule. I had no wish to undertake the conspicuous *rôle* of a *demoiselle d'honneur*, but as the niece of *l'oncle Jacques* I had no choice.

In our festal array *le p'tit chou* regarded herself and me with great satisfaction.

"Me I find we are very well, me and thou! Very *chic* all the two; let us hope they will give us two fine young men for the *cortège*!" she observed.

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French weddings are not unlike the same *The male* exhilarating functions in England. The *dowager* flowers, the Wagner music, the fashionable, smiling assembly, the imposing, rustling dowagers, their weighty, white waist-coated partners (we ought to have a male equivalent for "dowager"), the fussy married sisters who have "been through it all" themselves, the immaculate gilded youth, the bridal *cortège*, including the tiny page and the little flower maidens, the composed bride, even down to the obviously nervous bridegroom,—all are the same.

The Catholic service, as those familiar with it will remember, addresses one or two rather startling sentences to the bride. The bridegroom is handled much more gently, but Madame Derode thinks a word of the same advice and warning to him would in most cases be not altogether "badly placed." However, no one appears to pay any more attention than they do in England to the crudely primitive statements of the Anglican marriage service. I have often wondered why some wise, great bishop or cardinal does not make a new marriage service, wholly

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A trying ordeal beautiful, serious, and true. When I suggested this to the Reverend Percy Jones, he seemed quite annoyed and said the English service was already most beautiful, serious, and true to those who read it aright. I never argue with clergymen; Uncle Jack says it needs a special training, so I "turned the conversation" after the manner of the *p'tit chou* and asked him whether the Married Women's Property Act had yet passed in France.

Two enormous gilt armchairs facing the altar were provided for the bride and bridegroom, and there they sat enthroned during the greater part of the service. The main duty of the bridesmaids, *demoiselles d'honneur*, was to "make a quest;" accompanied by our respective cavaliers hand in hand we made the tour of the congregation collecting alms. It is rather a trying ordeal, and must be so for the audience also, as they are quested by two or three different couples, and wind up sometimes with the imposing verger; this no doubt is when their previous donations have not come up to the mark.

Our questing tour accomplished, the

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bride and bridegroom rose at last, and *Creatures of habit* quitting their gold armchairs retired to the vestry, where in a long continuous stream their intimate friends and relations proceeded to follow them, fall on their necks, kissing them on both cheeks, and offered effusive congratulations mixed with a good deal of light badinage.

Monsieur Lemaire went through it all heroically. A Frenchman carries off a situation of this kind with more ease than an Englishman; but then he is accustomed to being kissed on both cheeks by his men friends and relations, even at stations and on platforms.

At the marriage reception again more kisses, more flowers, more music, with the addition of champagne and all the delicacies of the season.

I found *le p'tit chou* perched on the sofa by the side of Henriette de l'Abbadie, the centre of an admiring and applauding audience, young Edouard Derode at her feet.

"Come, I supplicate of you," said Gustave, "take away my niece before she says more inconveniences."

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*Encore
l'enfant
terrible*

A bridesmaid on my other side whispered, "She promised Suzette just now to order a *bébé* for her at the cabbage merchant's to be ready on her return in a month. Suzette has saved herself!"

"But yes me I shall marry myself soon," the little *chou* was announcing, "very soon, so soon as I shall be of the height of this little monsieur here." She points to a small man who happens to be very sensitive about his stature.

"Why shouldst thou wait, *ma petite cocotte, mon amour?*" says Henriette de l'Abbadie, while a good-looking young advocate chimes in eagerly:

"Me I will take thee now, *ma mignonne — sur le champ* — for thou art altogether delicious and *jolie à croquer*. Come let us ask monseigneur to give us the 'stroke of grace' (*coup de grace*)."

"No — not — you say follies!" the little *chou* replies with dignity. "You know very well I am too little, for the moment. If it arrived to me that my baby was big, I could not even carry it with these arms so thin; besides, I will marry the Prince who is at

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the 'Hippodrome' and possesses the five big *Candid criticism* lions, not thou!"

Edouard, having shortly before been snubbed himself, claps his hands with delighted *bravas!*

"Mademoiselle Jacqueline, me I have three horses — that is well worth five lions — will you not espouse me?" asks my cavalier, a fine *militaire*, with a uniform which he rightly judges must incline towards him all female hearts.

The little cabbage regards him critically, the uniform, the fine flourishing moustache, and the three horses weigh heavily in the scale, but there are clearly other considerations.

"I would well," she answers sincerely, "only see you, when me I am a *grande demoiselle*, you will without doubt by then be old, but old of a hundred years!"

"Ah, *de grace*, mademoiselle. A hundred, but that is a ripe age indeed!" laughs her victim uneasily.

"But yes, one sees already, that with you the head pierces through the hairs like that of Grandpapa Lefèvre. It is the old age that, told me the *concierge*."

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Gustave
embar-
rassed*

“*Hélas*, mademoiselle, must I then for this cause be denied for always a dear little wife to console me?”

“But no,” she relents. “I say not that. *Voyons!*” — at this moment she perceives me and Gustave — “marry yourself with *ma c’sine*; ah, but yes, I know well, you love her much,” — a look of fiendish mischief on her face, — “*l’oncle* Gustave he recounted to Mémé, how in the church you had all the time the air of desiring to embrace her — but yes! Me I heard him say it!”

Gustave at this point apparently vanished through the floor, not a trace of him remained.

The unhappy cavalier — he had shortly before asked Uncle Jack if he might come and call — protested that his conduct so irreproachable ought at least to have shielded him against such barbaric exposure of his secret sentiments, etc. He was cut short and drowned, however, by the uproarious merriment which followed this daring “inconvenience” of *le p’tit chou*; meanwhile I made my way to her and attempted to decoy her to the door. She seemed, however, to divine that my purpose when I got her there

A F R E N C H M A R R I A G E

was to put her head in a bag, and firmly declined to budge an inch. How she continued I dared not stay and hear, but Edouard's frequent *bravas* were not reassuring, and it was a great relief to my mind when the stir of the bride's departure dispersed her audience. *Rice and tears*

We wound up the afternoon with a light shower of tears and waving of moist cambric handkerchiefs as the happy pair drove off, alone together for the first time in their lives, for Madame Derode, though she holds with an advanced and enlightened education, is in some respects conventionally old fashioned, and has a horror of *les demies vierges* and all their emancipated ways.

Madame de Bretelle's final verdict, as, with gold eyeglass raised, she watched the departing *coupé*, gave the anxious mother-heart of her sister sweet consolation.

"Well, my Louise, he has gained me *le malin*. You have, to thus say, invested your capital in the brains of this beguiler, and I find myself believing your returns are safe. *Chut!* me I know all you would say about the heart of our Suzette, well I believe that also is safe!"

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

*An ideal
chaperon*

MADAME D'AVILLE always acts as my chaperon whenever *les convenances* demands that even I, the emancipated *jeune fille anglaise*, should have one. Uncle Jack likes society to come to him, but rarely goes out of his own house for it, and Mémé is, as a chaperon and in all other relations of life, simply ideal. She is ever ready to accompany me wherever my exploring spirit would lead, whether into circles Bohemian, aristocratic, literary, or scientific. It is under her wing I have attended the receptions of the brilliant lady who heads this chapter and to whom I am coming presently.

She (Mémé) holds my hand at the dentist's, she holds my purse-strings when shopping, and she receives my proposals, so delicately handling the situation that pleasant relations are seldom disturbed and we all sail on gaily as before. She knows about my Viking on the sea, and strongly dis-

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

approves of anything so protracted and un- *My poor*
practical — a foolish affair which dates from *Gustave*
the schoolroom — a cousin! A younger
son, too, the miserable one! *Hélas!* all this
folly is spoiling very surely my otherwise
promising future, declares Mémé. “For the
rest, ‘a door must either be open or shut,’
and since the family declare no engagement,
there remains but a foolish sentiment for
this unhappy one who obtains never his
promotion which he awaits always. *Bon,*
keep the sentiment, but as a woman married,
de grace, and for the moment consider thyself
free — *pas moyens autrement!*”

I assure Mémé for the hundredth time I am
free — free as the wind; and he, my detri-
mental, also. We are both free to marry any
one we meet who pleases us more. But,
singular taste that we both possess, as yet,
however diligently we search, we find no one!

“And my poor Gustave? Of him you
will nothing? In truth, he adores you, in
spite of all the *badinage* with which he
tries to disguise it. It is a good boy all the
same, and would make a husband devoted
and reasonable.”

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Mémé's
passion*

Then it is my turn to round on Mémé.

"You dear, darling humbug," I say in English, "you know perfectly well you are devoutly thankful to me that I 'will nothing of him.' You would not give him up to anybody for all the world! He adores me only by moments, and you know with me he shall never get badly hurt."

Yet in spite of all I say, Mémé's passion for matchmaking causes fresh hope for my future continually to blossom. The other day she called in the morning, bubbling with excitement.

"Now this time here you must listen to me well! No, but it is a folly to mock yourselves of me always!"

Uncle Jack and I promised our most serious attention.

"*Bien*, you remember then, *ma chère* Betty, the Marquis de Sérignan, for whom you played the Wagnère accompaniments it is two evenings ago at the reception of Madame de Fleury. *Bon!* as I told you at the time he is *épris!* Me I saw it in his manner of turning the leaves of music, in the homage of his regard. Yesterday

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

Madame de Fleury brings to visit me the aunt of this monsieur, Madame de Saint Juste, and she conveys to me a declaration from monsieur, her nephew, and asks me formally of the preliminaries and whether he is permitted to come and 'make the court.' ” *The preliminaries*

“ The preliminaries ! That is excellent ! ” cry Uncle Jack and I together. But Mémé checks any untimely levity by explaining that for himself Monsieur de Sérignan would prefer to ask no *dot* with his bride, but unfortunately his family insist on his doing so, there being large annuities to pay to them out of his estates, which are all the same considerable. His virtues are then enumerated. Heart, head, person, pocket, age, lineage, all A one ! What more could either I or Uncle Jack desire ?

“ Dear Mémé, ” I replied, “ will you tell that nice sensible lady, Madame de Saint Juste, that I am one of a large, improvident English family, and that Uncle Jack is living on an annuity, while his pictures, his only possessions, are left to the National Gallery ; the large ones *are*, you know, and only this

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Wedded harmony morning he was saying he would have the smaller cremated with him, since his family are such a set of Philistines. That will be a cold *douche* for Madame de Saint Juste and her nephew."

Poor Mémé wrung her hands. "Ah, but Béty, *ma chérie*, you are impossible! What to do! *L'oncle Jacques* also he gives me no help. It is an egoist colossal that one, he wishes not to renounce his niece. But it is a bad quarter of an hour that you prepare for me with that *pauvre monsieur* for he desired much this marriage should be arranged. It appears he is very seriously *épris* this time here! He thought how you could have made the music together all the evenings. It appears that for him the life of the interior has great charm!"

But I assured Mémé the prospect of those evenings, stretching out interminably to the end of life, rendered me giddy; that the emotional tenor voice would, I feared, get on my nerves, and there would certainly be a divorce or at least a *séparation de corps et de biens* before the end of the year. How would she feel then?

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

Mémé groaned over me, and as I accompanied her to the door she whispered, “I *Mémé moralizes* believe you think still of that other, *le mal-heureux*. *Ma chère enfant*, be then reasonable. Keep the heart for the *beau cousin* if thou wilt, I forbid it not; but in the meantime marry yourself suitably, *le beau cousin* will only adore you the more!”

Which advice would never lead one to suppose Mémé the rigid moralist she in truth is. I know of no one less likely to smile forgiveness on a *jeune mariée* with a *cavaliere servente* in her train, than the Baronne d’Aville.

Absorbing as is the subject of one’s admirers, I think, however, I must return to it later on, and say something now of the Marquise de Fleury, at whose reception I played those famous Wagner accompaniments, for she is a really remarkable woman.

The secret of Ninon de l’Enclos is hers, the secret of eternal youth. Some people declare her age to be sixty, others fifty; opinion varies according to the radius of her spell, those in the inner circle desperately

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Perpetual youth asserting, in spite of statistics and rumours of a grown-up son, always referred to as *le petit* by his mother, that she is still in the first freshness of her thirties, others declaring that age in connection with such a divinity has no more significance than with some bright particular star.

The Marquise de Fleury's youth is not merely that of the heart which wakes every morning bounding with the joy of living, and the young mind alert and eager to investigate with thrilling enjoyment all things new and untried. This gift of the gods, precious as it is, she shares after all with many whose exterior, worn, faded, and old, forces them to suppress their inner youth and apologise for its lack of harmony with their years. But Madame de Fleury's youth is expressed with artistic perfection in a figure tall and lithe as Diana's and a face of curves, delicate, soft, and smiling as a Hebe.

However reprehensible they may deem her methods for preserving her youthful and fascinating appearance, no one, not even the most prejudiced, can deny that she succeeds. Success belongs to her, she has always had

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

it; not perhaps so much the *succès d'estime*, *How it is* as what she much prefers, the *succès fou*; *accom-*
not only men, but women also, succumb to *plished*
her, and some of the best among them. Mémé, who has known her since the days when they went to the same convent, always fights her battles manfully: "The woman who can succeed in presenting to our eyes a picture so agreeable even if it be by causing herself to be painted, dyed, and massaged, and giving herself the good God alone knows what trouble beside, merits our gratitude and makes herself pardoned a thousand times, *ma foi!* It is those who do all those things there and succeed not that merit to be blamed. As to the loss of time, *mon Dieu!* but the same might be reproached to any artist. De la Gandara makes a beautiful woman on canvas, with paints, oils, and those machines there; Madame de Fleury makes the same, but her beautiful woman moves and speaks, *voilà tout!*"

But Madame Derode shakes her head. She and Mémé can never agree about this lady. "Ah, but it finishes never, seest thou! My Suzette passed a week with her while

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

The daily programme one rehearsed for the comedy of Monsieur Ibsène which the marquise played last winter. Suzette recounted to me the daily programme, which behold. After her chocolate, at eight o'clock, she rises always and promenades herself on foot to the Baths for her *douche*. This exercise she gives herself to conserve her form. The *douche* accomplished, behold our marquise returned in time for a *séance* with Pöppelsdorf, the new Dutch *masseur*, of a hand that makes miracles it appears. After his departure, and while she is in train to repose herself, we have to do with Madame Chose for the manicure, Mademoiselle Blanc to readjust the false hips and some say also the cheek supports. Ah, but yes! Monsieur Hubert once in the week at least for the hair painting, — a veritable artist that last I promise you. Also from time to time a visit to the Cabinet de Beauté for a thorough refurbishing. About the mid-day Félicité, with an embarrassment of riches, holds a solemn conference with her mistress and the marquise makes the choice of her toilet with a solicitude, a consideration, one would imagine her a *débutante* of eighteen ! ”

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

“Ah, but one cannot deny it,” pleads her *The pro-*
loyal friend; “the toilet is an affair of an *gramme*
importance, a gravity, above all for we others *continued*
who have passed the first youth.” (In spite
of these sentiments, Madame d’Aville’s own
costumes are usually decided on in ten min-
utes at a *Bon Marché* sale!) Madame Derode
gives an imperceptible smile, which skims
along the well-worn edge of her friend’s skirt,
and continues:

“At midday and a half a little break-
fast on the fork, exquisite and appetising,
of which our friend partakes with great
prudence and discretion, having care to
avoid all meats which might increase the
embonpoint, for which she experiences a
mortal fear. In general one monsieur only
is favoured with an invitation to this re-
past. Our friend, as you know, has a pen-
chant for the ‘head to head’ breakfast. It
stimulates without fatiguing, she pretends.
In the afternoon she makes visits to the
dressmaker, the *modiste*, the *corsetière*, et
cetera, et cetera. Then a drive in the Bois,
and a round of calls and ‘five o’clocks.’
Ah, but I forget we have not finished!

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

A rigorous treatment Before making the toilet for dinner we have yet two other *séances*. The one with the famous *masseuse* for the face and neck, Madame Bonaventure, another with the Professor Philipoport, for whose lotions and pomades one pays twenty-five, thirty francs a pot. Now I ask you a little, is not all this too strong?"

"My faith! if Bougereau or de la Gandara found it necessary for their portraits to mix the paint with pounded diamonds, who would condemn? Not you or I, dear friend. As to the waste of time," continues Mémé staunchly, "to do justice to our gay marquise, you must not omit from your programme the mass of things intellectual, artistic, even religious, in which she interests herself. There are the courses at the Sorbonne and Collège de France; she has just finished those of Professor Folet on the philosophy of Nietzsche, of a profundity to render foolish an ordinary person, it appears! She attends the opera, never does she miss a first night at the theatre, nor the *grande messe* at St. Philippe du Roule or the Madeleine every Sunday. She is besides

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

patroness of the Théâtre Libre, and *abonnée* *The*
to all the concerts of Wagnère. Not a dis- *Salon*
course on the spiritism, the psychism, the
Buddhism, the palmistry, the planet Mars,
the telegraphy without wires, and the Lord
knows what of strange and *bizarre*, but
there you may perceive our gay friend, full
of an energy, an enthusiasm, that makes to
envy many of us her juniors, by the side of
her cold and inanimate as oysters. Then in
her *rôle* of hostess, what can one see of more
charming, more gracious, more seductive?
No one is neglected, no one bores himself.
What a picture she presented last night, sur-
rounded by her little court, — the poet, the
artist, the diplomat, the foreign ambassador,
and the prince of musicians; with what
adoration each regarded her as they bowed
low and kissed her hand. Resembling a god-
dess of antiquity I find her, whom some divine
breath has suddenly inspired with animation.
That costume in exquisite satin, colour of
oyster, *décolleté* — ”

“One may even say very *décolleté*!”
observes Madame Derode, with raised
eyebrows.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Art for "But such a superb figure, does it not
Art's sake make itself pardoned? And that single
row of pearls, how it designed the contour
of the throat, formed like a column of
alabaster; and the diamond star, crowning
the summit of her magnificent blonde
chevelure, what a queenly air it lent!"

"The hair tint is well applied and
deceives many people. Her sister-in-law
tells me her hair is white as the aged
Madame Vieuxtemps' already for fifteen
years. As to the figure with the false hip
à la mode and other little contrivances! But
there, you are of a loyalty, an enthusiasm,
my dear friend! On this subject you have
lost the head like a young man enamoured
to the folly. Useless to discuss from the
point of view serious and practical."

Mémé laughs good-humouredly.

"Ah, but we are all enamoured, we
others who know her in the intimacy, see
you. It makes nothing what she does, we
pardon, we excuse, we finish by admiring
and adoring the naughty marquise. That
which is for the morals deplorable, I grant
you. But my excuse, behold it. You say

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

to me, 'Here is a woman already of a *Whom*
ripe age, — sixty, seventy, a hundred, it *the Gods*
matters not. It is but convenient that she *love*
dress herself like the other good grand-
mammās, rest at home in the corner of the
chimney, and knit the stocking when she
is not dozing.' I am of your advice, that
there is very surely the life in future for
me, for you, perhaps; but *de grâce*, dear
friend, seek not to harness the comet with
the rules of the sober planet. A little
variety in this dull life, that is what
refreshes, is it not so? Shall I look for
you at the reception of the marquise next
week?" she inquires, with a mischievous
twinkle.

And Madame Derode is fain to confess
that she may be there. "It is dangerous to
offend one with the tongue so brilliant and
unscrupulous. Suzette, besides, wishes to
go," she explains.

"Ah, you go, of course, like all the
world who attend the court whether they
approve the queen or no! One says there
will be a new violinist, who rivals the tra-
ditions of the Paganini; and Prony, of the

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Sixty
summers* Odéon, is to recite some unpublished verses of Verlaine, original to that point it appears no editor finds the courage to print them !”

One great secret of Madame de Fleury's success is her extraordinary power of enjoying life. Her ready laugh rings with the spontaneous mirth of a child let out of school. Her high spirits would turn a Scotch funeral or a Quaker meeting into a cheerful gathering. Bored she never is; silent she cannot be, unless asleep. And this fair and gay Parisian is, according to the only dependable record, namely, her baptismal register, fifty-seven years old. It was the one annoying thing about that otherwise well-managed little affair of the divorce last winter, her age, positively the real date, without any blinking, had to be announced. It was, as the marquise declared, vulgar, brutal, of a primitive barbarism, but there, it had to be done. She consoled herself, saying doubtless there were little serpent tongues who had already given her considerably more years. “A woman well preserved must pay for it! ‘Is she not a

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

miracle?' whisper the dear friends, themselves already *sans* hair, *sans* teeth, *sans* complexion for twenty years past, 'and think of it, she held me at my baptism!' Ah, but me, I know them. Fifty-seven only! but it will cause them a mortal *ennui*!"

Mémé had foretold the divorce when the marquise announced to her the projected marriage with Monsieur de Croÿ. She did her best to induce her friend to abandon the idea and let well alone. "Thy present position, widow, charming, seductive, sought after, veritable queen of society, what can there be of more desirable?" she pleaded. "As to this new marriage, believe me, *ma chérie*, it will never march, never in life. It is but a fantasy that has jumped thee in the head. Be counselled, send walking this Monsieur de Croÿ."

But the marquise was obstinate.

"Seest thou, my cat, it is for the evenings of the opera I require him, to put me on the mantle, to hold me the fan, the lorgnette, et cetera, to give me the hand to my carriage. I cannot depend always on another man. A husband is a nuisance, as thou sayest truly,

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Maurice de Croÿ and me, do I not know it? I, who have endured three of them already — all the varieties. Still it is not to be denied they have their uses, otherwise very surely, as Monseigneur Dupont, the adorable man, observed to me the other day, the good God would never have created them. Now Maurice de Croÿ is man of the world, well spread in society, handsome as the devil, with the shoulders of an Apollo, and, what is of more value, of an air superb and distinguished; in a word, he enhances the beauty and charm of the woman he accompanies.”

“Excellent, if he could be kept in your *loge* at the opera and taken out when required,” remarked Mémé. “But, dear friend, reflect well, this man here is no complacent invalid. He is enamoured of you — enamoured like a student, though he has forty-five years. He will be jealous, perhaps, *exigeant*, and thou who canst not support the interference!”

“*Sac à papier!*” laughed the fair widow of three bygone husbands. “One must be indeed an imbecile if one knows not how to pull oneself well out of those affairs

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

there ; no, the real difficulty it is madame *A pictur-*
my mother-in-law. There is an old lady *esque back-*
who is a hard crust ! She has the eyes like *ground*
the dog Argus. She holds her rents with
the grip of a dead hand ; and this marriage
pleases her not. It is quite possible she
will leave her seventy thousand francs of
rents to the young son of de Croÿ, a child
of nine years whom she has adopted. That
which would prove an event most annoying,
though Maurice has of his own a good
fortune."

Naturally enough, however, neither the
inflexible attitude of the old lady nor the
warning of all her dearest friends prevented
the marquise from carrying out her whim.
The fact was, she felt in need of a fresh
spurt of excitement just at this point. It
was seven years since her last husband's
death. He had been for long an invalid,
quiet and unobtrusive, lending a rather pic-
turesque background to the wife he persist-
ently adored and whose every caprice was
his law. The large fortune she enjoyed
was his, as also the smart little hôtel in the
Avenue du Bois de Boulogne and the châ-

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Conventional disabilities teau and vineyards in La Vendée. The first of the marquis's predecessors had been a rich old *roué* to whom the fair Renée de la Marre had been handed over at the age of seventeen, fresh from her white convent. With him she had spent five years of initiation in the ways of the world and more especially of the ways of men, — years which convinced her, after the shock of that "first step which costs," that life was after all a very amusing game if you just took things lightly like the butterflies and never worried or thought too much. The dear good nuns did not know life and did not know men, bless them. They might understand training a little cherub for Paradise, but not a pretty girl for Paris !

Notwithstanding all her worldly wisdom, however, the young widow fell a victim, a year after her husband's death, to a handsome, unscrupulous fortune hunter. "A man impossible," Mémé briefly sums him up. For the sake of their little son she bore with him four years. Then, realising that life was really not gay under this *régime*, she obtained a divorce just in time to save

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

the *débris* of her first husband's fortune from *The hom-*
the devourer. Marriage with the elderly *age of Art*
Marquis de Fleury came like "port after
stormy seas," and she sailed into it with a
light heart and smiling eyes. Mémé re-
cords of him that he adored but never
worried her, and was content with what to
other men might have appeared but small
mercies.

It was from this time began her reign as
a society queen. Fashionable artists vied
with one another in reproducing *la belle*
marquise in marbles, oils, pastels, etc. She
was "L'Aurore" at the Champs Elysées, she
was "Hélène de Troy" at the Champ de
Mars. Musicians dedicated to her their
most impassioned songs. Poets addressed
to her their choicest inspirations. She drew
around her a select court, and the patronage
of Renée Marquise de Fleury was coveted
by artistic stars even of the first magnitude,
while the honour of her friendship gave a
cachet eagerly sought by men of distinction
in all circles.

"She has *esprit*, animation, intelligence,
above all, she is sympathetic," was the unani-

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

The garden of Hesperides mous verdict. "With her one bores oneself never."

So they went to her to be revitalised, the jaded politician, the *blasé* diplomat, the weary man of science, the yearning poet, the restless, aspiring artist.

When the marquis faded gradually from his shady background into the still deeper shadow of the cypress trees of Montmartre, it caused no perceptible change in the full and varied life of his widow. Instead of her annual three weeks in the giddy whirl of Trouville, she went to the Engadine, that was all, her trunks filled with toilets of the most discreet and becoming mourning in place of the ravishing costumes in muslins, laces, and frou-frous for the *bains de mer*, the *plage*, and the Casino. The season of grapes she spent as usual at her château in La Vendée, inviting only a small and select company to share her solitude with *mon petit*, as she persisted in calling her son Jules, a stalwart young man of some twenty-five summers, and Monsieur l'Abbé, who, from occupying the post of tutor, had slipped into his niche as a part of the household furniture.

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

Mémé has passed a week at the château on *Mother* more than one occasion. She declares the *and son* parting embrace of mother and son is generally accompanied by a mutual and profound sigh which the marquise, though she attributes it to regret, knows very well to be relief on both sides.

“Thou pleasest thyself always here in this peaceful country, is it not so, *mon petit?*” she inquires with a momentary awakening of maternal solicitude caused by the adieux.

“*Parbleu, mais si, maman,*” the “little one” makes answer. “The farm, the vineyard, my dogs, horses, pigs, I find them more gay than thy boulevards and salons of Paris, filled to suffocation with imbeciles *en grande toilette.*”

“*Fi donc, méchant!* But one day I promise thee thou shalt have thy old mamma in white hairs and spectacles to sit in the big armchair in the corner of the chimney — when she has finished with life, seest thou, and life has finished with her! For the moment she must depart again to that city abominable yet seductive. Be prudent, *mon*

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Matri- petit, cover well the throat when thou
mony dis- makest the chase in those early mornings
couraged of the fog."*

The little one, shaking himself like a shaggy bear, congratulates himself that he need have no fear of his mother's alarming promises being carried out for many years to come.

One day at *déjeuner*, Jules, who seldom started a subject of conversation, startled them all by asking his mother if she did not think it was about time for him to marry and range himself. Mémé restrained her natural impulse to dash in with half a dozen charming and eligible *parties*. She knew from former discussions with her friend on the subject that she regarded it as a notion to be discouraged for many reasons. The marquise managed the situation with the skill which had safely steered her through far more dangerous shoals.

"But, my poor dear little one! How then? Thou wouldst cage thyself before thou hast tried the wings? What unhappy thought is this? Ask then of our good friend, Madame d'Aville, some counsels.

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

Assuredly thou wilt next make the proposition to enter with the Carmelites up there *Precipitate Youth* on the hill."

Le petit protested. "Thou deceivest thyself, mamma. Me, I know life; very well I know it since a long time already!" He cast a surreptitious glance at his quondam tutor. "It is possible for a man to live without inhabiting Paris, know thou!"

"Ah, *le malin!*" cried his mother. "Listen now, my treasure, my little cock. At thy age a marriage would be a thing ridiculous. Thou wouldst repent it before the moon of honey was passed. It is only the little *bourgeois* who marries himself in that fashion. Also it would be for the moment a great imprudence, for I could not augment thy rents by one sou. Later, in two years, three perhaps, thy mother who adores thee she will arrange for thee a marriage; but a marriage superb, I promise thee. Give me only the time to make the choice. Madame d'Aville, our good friend here, she also will interest herself for thee. A suitable, convenient marriage, knowest thou, does not make itself, like an omelet, in five minutes.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Un fils
dévot*

In waiting amuse thyself well. Be gay ; it is right that the young people amuse themselves well. The marriage, seest thou, it is an affair serious — even very serious.”

For three seconds the marquise looked as solemn as a child playing at church, then broke into a rippling laugh. “Embrace me, my little cock,” she cried, “and trust thy future to thy mother who adores thee.”

It was, after all, the best thing to do, for *le petit* fully realised the unwisdom of a marriage without his mother’s consent and assistance. “It is true, thou shouldst know how much the marriage is serious,” he laughed.

And so the matter had been left, greatly against the urgent counsel of Mémé, who wishes to marry every mother’s son save her own. Years went by and the fourth marriage of the marquise found *le petit* still enjoying his *vie de garçon* on the lines indicated by his mother, while awaiting the “superb marriage” for which he now appeared in no hurry. The annexation of a new stepfather elicited no more than a shrug of his massive shoulders. On hearing of

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

the divorce, two years later, he remarked *Ecclesiastical interest* laconically to Gustave, who happened to be his guest, "Body of Bacchus! but I thought she would have finished with him sooner. I gave him but a year; was it not so, Monsieur l'Abbé, *hein?* "

"Madame thy mother is a woman charming, but at the same time of a character strongly original. A woman outside the line," replied the Abbé, with a deprecating wave of his plump white hands.

"*Parbleu*, very original not a doubt!" rejoined the son. "Here is a newspaper which recounts some pretty histories. One says she shut the door of her hôtel and refused the unhappy one to enter. De Croÿ enrages himself, he returns furious, a revolver in the hand. He makes her a scene before the domestics. In the end he rushes off and *affiche* himself everywhere with Madame de Vitry, pretty blond, with a husband in the Madagascar." *Le petit* paused and read to himself, Gustave looking over his shoulder.

"But, my son, that is not *gentille*, continue then!" cries the Abbé, his little eyes sparkling with eager interest.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

'*T is an
ill wind*

"I thought it perhaps not suitable for the ears of the church," answered Jules, and continued aloud: "One fine day here is the hero who returns from the Madagascar suddenly when one expects him not. Then behold all the fat is in the fire; there follows a duel. No one is wounded save a '*témoin*' who, in saving himself, embraces a policeman and injures the nose against his fist. But here is a pretty little scandal which arrives precisely at the right moment for my good little mamma. She loses not a moment to give the miserable one the *coup de grâce*. Down she drops with her case of divorce and comes out last week with *éclat*, smiling, triumphant; not bad that, *hein?* "

"Madame, thy mother, seest thou, my son, it is a woman very remarkable!" commented the Abbé, in an awestruck tone.

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Six months later the Marquise de Fleury (she resumed her former name after the divorce) was again holding her court in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, and the verdict of all her guests after a particularly

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

brilliant and successful evening was entirely in accord with that of Monsieur l'Abbé.

*A Platon-
tonic re-
version*

Perhaps as I have referred before to Monsieur de Sérignan, I might mention here that I met him again that night, and we struck up quite a unique sort of friendship—for Paris, that is. Honest *camaraderie*, and no humbug, though I know heaps of people will refuse to believe this possible, given the preliminary circumstances, and a Frenchman to boot!

Monsieur de Sérignan began by making me an appallingly solemn bow, with no more personal recognition than had I been a passing funeral. This attitude seemed to me absurd in a man whose feeling for me shortly before had been so kindly that he could even contemplate with serenity the idea of making music with me every evening so long as we both should live.

"You made it perfectly clear to Madame de Saint Juste that a marriage with her nephew was absolutely impossible?" I asked, drawing Mémé aside.

"*Ma chérie*, but yes; only so, as I told you, would he retire himself; I told her

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Courage! quite squarely. I repeated all your absurdities — that the *dot* was lacking, the religions different, the marriage could never arrange itself. Do you perhaps repent you of your folly?" A gleam of hope lit Mémé's eye. "A *dot* very moderate would content the de Sérignans, and impossible that you are without the sou, my child! He is an excellent *parti!*"

"I know it — I am going now to tell him so — I hate to see a man looking so discouraged!" With this I took the ever-ready arm of Gustave and steered him in the direction of the marquis, leaving poor Mémé gasping at my boldness.

"Good evening, monsieur. I hope you have brought those delicious songs of Wagnère. I am longing to hear the 'Traüme' once more," I said cheerfully.

The marquis drew his heels together and bowed profoundly, murmuring in a low voice as Gustave turned to pay his *hommages* to the fair Henriette that "One had not always the inspiration — the vein — the courage *enfin*, to sing Wagnère." But I saw he was dying to do so, and as he is really quite an artist (no

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

one dares to sing at Madame de Fleury's *None but* unless he sing well), with the assistance of *the brave* my hostess I soon got him launched on the Wagner songs.

And as I sat there playing the dreamy magic harmonies to his rather too emotional singing I could not help reflecting what a curious being a Frenchman is! Imagine the courage of this man! He meets a woman for one hour in a crush, knows no more of her, well, than she does of him, and yet he is prepared without a qualm to bind himself by the iron chains of matrimony to pass the rest of his natural life with her. He is not overwhelmed with a love which robs him of prudence and reason; the vainest of women could not explain the phenomenon that way. He is *épris*, if you like, but that is the strongest term permissible; he faces the situation calmly and deliberately when in the approved manner he makes his proposal through a third person.

As to the courage of the woman on these occasions, well, it surpasses coherent thought; imagination totters before the surprises, the

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

The marriage game eye-openers that must be in store for her. But women have an extraordinary amount of courage stowed away beneath an often misleading surface. Lombroso, I believe, says it is a lack of imagination, combined with a very unsensitive nervous system, but whatever may be the cause, it is certainly there, as dentists and doctors will verify.

There is a strong element of the gambler too in the majority of women, and marriage offers the chance of a big haul of happiness not attainable any other way — at present. Marriage in France has this advantage over the same institution in England — it leaves the woman generally much more her own mistress. She is absolute head and ruler of her own house, the furniture, linen, china, etc., are as a rule her property, and there is no doubt about it, the *dot* gives her a status denied the penniless bride, and inspires a good deal of most desirable respect in the male breast. It appears to me also the husband and wife do not jostle each other so closely as in England; each allows the other plenty of elbow-room.

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

Of course, according to French law, the *Music* position of women, as Madame Adam and *bath* the *féministes* have shown, is abominably and *charms* ridiculously unjust, but the Code Napoleon is happily a far cry from established custom, and the women of the upper and middle classes—I know little of the others—have as good a position as any in this, at the best, blundering, makeshift old world.

“Sanft an deiner Brust verglühn
Und dann sinken in die Gruft,”

sang the emotional baritone of my *ex* *prétendant*.

“Mademoiselle, how can I thank you for your accompaniment so delicious! Ah, but so sympathetic!” he murmured, as the audience applauded loudly.

I replied I was more than thanked in hearing a favourite song so admirably sung.

He leant over the piano and looked at me hesitatingly.

“Mademoiselle, you have the happiness to be English! In England—is it not so?—the ideas for the women are more wide, more noble, more rational, *enfin*. Pardon me if I

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Two-
banded
courage*

make a false step in this favour I ask. Will you permit me to come and make you my homages on the 'day' of monsieur your uncle?"

"Come over here, monsieur, and let us have a little chat first," I said, for I felt it was absurd for two sensible human beings, which we both undoubtedly were, not to come to a clear understanding without the confusion of an intermediate third person.

"I am going to be very English and very frank," I began, "and you must be the same. *C'est entendu?*"

He agreed eagerly.

I felt towards this man as one does towards the person one has saved from a great danger — drowning or falling over a precipice. Like a child he had desired to take home with him a packet of dynamite, fondly believing it to be candy. My action had saved him from certain disaster.

"You did me a great honour, monsieur, in the wish you expressed through madame your aunt. But as you know already, it is impossible, — quite impossible in all the cases," I hastened to add, as he began an

CONCERNING A GAY MARQUISE

energetic protest. "If I say to you I shall be happy to see you, monsieur, you will not think I am giving you permission to 'make the court?'" *Confessio amantis*

He looked at me without at once answering. It made me rather uncomfortable. I had been so sure my disqualifications would settle the question, but now he was trying to say something about nothing in the world signifying if only — I saw I must be quite plain.

"Nothing can make it possible, monsieur, and I will tell you why. I am not announced as *fiancée*; the paraded troth, the betrothal rings, and all those machines there, I have them in horror, still it arrives I suppose at the same point. There is one only whom I will ever marry — one to whom for a long time I have given the heart."

He gave a quick look in the direction of Gustave. I shook my head and smiled. "Oh, no, it is an affair that dates from childhood. We are an odd people in England you know! But I see no reason, now that we well understand each other, you and I, why we should not be good friends.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*A rash
responsi-
bility*

So, will you come and see me and bring the songs — yes? ”

“Mademoiselle, I feel the heart big at this fashion you have of talking to me. What shall I say, *mon Dieu*? But yes, I will come. I will renounce loyally my cherished hopes, that you never regret your splendid frankness to me. Ah, but I would like much to marry *une Anglaise* ! ” he sighed.

“And you shall do so ; me, I will find you one charming and beautiful,” I promised rashly.

And with the assurance that he placed himself absolutely in my hands, we parted the best of friends, and, what is more, have remained so ever since. He is rather on my mind, though, for I have not yet found him the charming and beautiful *Anglaise*, and I can see he is depending entirely on me to do so. Frenchmen are queer ! But then so are all men, for that matter.

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

UNCLE JACK suffers considerably *Our* from English friends and relations *English* of the "bird of passage" species, *friends* especially when I am with him. We must both disguise our real feelings rather successfully or we could scarcely remain so popular. People who never show the slightest interest in either of us the other side of the Channel, and who for years past have never ascertained whether we are alive or dead, suddenly evince a burning desire to "look us up" and overflow with affectionate reminiscences, to Uncle Jack quite unrecallable. The effort to respond heartily and spontaneously to the pleasure our unexpected visitors evidently feel in having "just caught him" costs the dear old man much painful effort, for he is so constructed that he would scruple to repel a mosquito.

"What ought to be done for them, what do they expect, my dear?" he asks me

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Hempen anxiously. "Is this a case of dinner at
Home- Paillard's, a theatre and supper, or what?"
spuns

Great is his relief if I declare that a *déjeuner* will do them and a drive in the Bois with me.

But we did not get off so easily with Mr. and Mrs. Rogers.

Perrette brought in the card and handed it to my uncle, while we were sipping our *café noir* after a *tête-à-tête déjeuner*, our hearts at peace with the world, dreaming no evil at hand. Uncle Jack's face clouded with perplexity, mine with dismay, as he read out the card. "Who can these be, my dear child? Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rogers, I never heard of them, did I?"

"They belong to me," I groaned, and braced myself for the usual greeting.

Edith Rogers is one of a numerous battalion of cousins. We meet only at family weddings and funerals. I had not seen her or her husband for five years at least.

It was at once made clear that the Rogerses looked to me to do the honours of Paris.

"Henry and I place ourselves in your hands, Betty," she said in her most deter-

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

mined, conclusive tones. "We have ten *Unbidden* days here, and we only arrived last night, so *guests* you see we have lost no time in coming to look you up!"

"Oh, yes, I see!" I responded faintly, with I fear but a sickly smile.

"I have never met your uncle; is he at home? We must plan out something to do together each day;" and Edith Rogers drew out a note-book preparatory to fixing me irrevocably.

I fenced and shuffled and postponed, but all my tactics and resource were as wisps of straw to stay an on-coming torrent.

Morning, noon, or night, I was never free. "*Sont encore là, les Rôchères,*" Perrette would unceremoniously announce, with a look of profound commiseration for me. On one occasion she dealt with Edith after the unscrupulous fashion she employs to protect Uncle Jack from *les messieurs* of the *pattes de velours*. It was Uncle Jack's *jour de fête*, and we had asked two of his special pals, and one of mine, to *déjeuner*. Just as we sat down, there was a ring at the front door bell. "Rest thou; me, I go,"

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Perrette
prevari-
cates*

Perrette observed to Justine, and left the room. A moment later I heard her clear, decisive tones :

"Non, madame, mademoiselle est sortie."

There was a lull in the conversation round the table, and I caught the sound of a dreaded voice.

"Oh, comme je suis fâchée. Je vouly voir mademoiselle beaucoup une moment, une petit moment."

Perrette's reply was rapid and voluble. I lost a good deal, but the tone was distinctly negative. The next moment my heart was in my mouth.

"Alors je vou entrer une moment ; je vouly prêter sa chapeau gris ; c'est pour faire ma photographie, comprenez-vous." The voice had advanced.

"Le chapeau gris !" came Perrette's shrill reply. *"Hélas, madame, mais c'est là justement le chapeau que mademoiselle vient de porter."*

"How very exceedingly tiresome of Betty," I heard Edith, in most irascible English, as Perrette wished her a hearty *"Bon jour, madame."*

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

I was saved, but at what a price! It all *Honi soit* took place so quickly and unexpectedly I had no time to interfere or consider the moral aspect of the question before it was over. Prompt action has never been my strong point.

I remonstrated gravely with my deliverer afterwards. She shrugged her shoulders.

“Mademoiselle must scold; for me, I find I have done well. *Dame!* No means otherwise to ‘debarrass’ oneself!”

It was in reflecting on other “means” I thought suddenly of Gustave. He must help tide over these awful ten days.

Gustave is one of those curious beings who seem a cross between old man and child, sixteen and sixty. Chronologically, I believe, he is about nine-and-twenty. His experience as a Frenchman and Parisian is varied and manifold, but with it he maintains a guilelessness which is to me, I must confess, a cause of deep anxiety when any of my countrywomen happen to be present.

He moves among subjects, in England decorously shelved, with the unconscious

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Guileless
flattery* ease and freedom — I had almost said grace — of a young bull in a china shop. He never “sees” anything, though outraged propriety be lying in broken fragments all around him. Still, I felt the need of help was urgent, and knew I could count on his good nature.

My appeal to him was not in vain. I shall always remember that with gratitude. Gustave played up manfully.

For the four or five days following their first introduction, Gustave, in accordance with my instructions, devoted himself to *cette chère Meesus Rôchères*. He paid his homages daily, and daily visited me to report progress. He told her *le type anglais* was the one he found most admirable, most purely classical, *enfin*, most to *his* taste. He admired her nose, and in his simple, artless way he told her so. Edith Rogers liked it, and none the less that it came from a live French *baron*. After ten years of married life with a man utterly lacking both in poetry and observation, Gustave's appreciation fell like dew on a thirsty land. She had a good nose, large

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

but nobly planned, and she had known it *Gustave* all those silent years. Her face, lightened *and the* by the pleasure within, looked really hand- *proprieties* some.

Gustave was encouraged to proceed.

"You are a loffy creesha!" he exclaimed, as they drove home from the theatre one evening, Mr. Rogers, sleepy and bored, following in a *fiacre* with me.

Edith Rogers disclaimed this with an indulgent, "Oh, we never say that kind of thing in English!"

Gustave pulled out his pocket dictionary, a present from me, which he carries next his heart, and lit a match.

"Loffly, loffy," he murmured, turning the leaves. "Ah, *voilà!* 'Loffly! Worthy — off — loff.' *Mais, c'est ça justement!*" he repeated in convinced tones. "Comment? one do not say such ting in England? It is ver' well you come at last to France!"

"Was n't it sweet of the dear boy?" Edith remarked, repeating to me the conversation.

"Oh, he is devoted to you," I assured her. "But there is one proof of it to which



AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Love and the laundry I fear you are quite oblivious — his shirts and ties!”

“Shirts and ties!” she looked nervous.

“I was afraid you had not noticed, that is why I mention it. You know Gustave confides everything to me on the strength of our cousinship. I have adopted him as a son — well, nephew, if you prefer it! Whenever he is loving any one very much he shows it by the frequency with which he changes his costume. If he changes right to his shirt (all his shirts are made by Charvet!) I know he is pretty far gone. Yesterday his mother says he changed five times. The last time after dinner before going out to call on you.”

“He always looks very nice, I am sure — so well groomed — such a contrast to Henry.” Edith Rogers was for everything French just then.

“Yes, and that large bow tied artlessly under the chin lends such guileless innocence and candour to the face. Do try and persuade Mr. Rogers to adopt it!” I suggested.

She sighed. “Poor dear Henry is so

A C A F É C H A N T A N T

insular and prejudiced. He never will take *Playing*
any hints for improving himself." *with fire*

.
But the acquaintance between Edith and
Gustave which budded in so promising a
way ended, alas, abruptly and lamentably.
In one unlucky evening it was cut down,
dried up and withered.

.
A sudden and indiscriminate desire for
anything and everything French led Edith
Rogers to jump at Gustave's fatal suggestion
of an evening at a '*café chantant*.' I did my
best to throw cold water on the idea, know-
ing instinctively it was not an entertainment
to suit either her taste or that of her worthy
spouse — but unfortunately the arguments
which prevailed with Mr. Rogers only fired
his wife with a keener desire.

"Really, I don't think either of you
would care about it," I said; "the whole
thing is so very French — the jokes and
allusions have no point except to the
Parisian."

"Ah, well, that would be lost on me,"
Mr. Rogers admitted, "and you people in

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Playing Paris rattle away at such a pace I really
with fire can't follow!"

"Something purely French is precisely what I wish to see and hear," persisted his wife. "*I* find no difficulty in understanding the language." Which last assertion, though I doubted its accuracy, only made me the more anxious to deter her.

I tried a new tack. "You know the French are rather peculiar — English people are liable to be extremely shocked at some of the things they say!"

But this had no better effect. "Well, my dear Betty, you go yourself, don't you?" she observed drily. "I think I, a married woman, ought to be able to stand what *you* can!" (N. B. Why is it married women are supposed to have the nerves so enured, and the senses so blunted? Is n't it rather a reflection on the holy estate of matrimony?) "And that little Madame Lefèbre," went on Edith, "a perfect girl whom I met here yesterday, said it was quite the right thing to do — all the *beau monde* go to *Le Jardin d'Hafiz*."

We were in for it. It was Gustave's

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

party, and since he was giving it with the noble motive of assisting me, I could not refuse to go. I was sorry now that I had effectually put off Mr. Rogers, for I had to allow old General de Lille, whose jokes bore me to death, to accompany us in his place. Uncle Jack had found a more congenial engagement with an old crony at his favourite resort, the *Tour d'Argent*. The patron of the latter, the great Frédéric, has immortalised Uncle Jack, by adding a "*Fricassée Mortimère*" to his unique menu—a distinction my uncle values far more highly than he would a cross and garter from his sovereign. *Eager for the fray*

We dined at the Elysée Palace Hôtel, but not even its golden splendours and Blue Hungarian band could detain Edith Rogers. She insisted on leaving early, and it was with difficulty I induced her to miss the first few items, assuring her that the programme lasted till 11.30, and the star of the evening, Yvonne Ribert, would not appear till later on.

It was a lovely June night, and as we walked down the Avenue des Champs

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Franco-
phile the
order of
the day*

Elysées, Edith Rogers was loud in her praise of the beautiful broad walks and overhanging trees, with "the deliciously suggestive glimpses of gaily-lit *cafés* and theatres hidden away in the dark foliage." My heart sank as I realised how soon she would be enjoying more than a "delicious glimpse" of these alluring abodes.

"There is something so primitive and innocent in these out-of-door amusements you have in Paris," I heard her remark to Gustave. "One can't imagine anything here but what is gay and harmless with this heavenly sky and the trees overhead. Now, you know in England, everything is so terribly artificial."

"Ah, he is ver' shokin, the 'coffe-singing' of London?" he enquired, with eager interest.

"'Coffee-singing!' Oh, music halls, we call them. Well, English ladies never go to music halls—at least," she added, "no one I should care to know! They are not at all proper places, *pas comme il faut*, you know."

"*Tout à fait* 'shokin,' — *oui?*" Gustave

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

asked pleasantly. "And hit is now the first *A willing* visit Madame is making for a *café chantant!*" *exponent* (Gustave's use of the aspirate is capricious.)

"Yes, absolutely my first visit; so you must explain to me all the jokes I don't understand," she answered 'gaily.

From the cordial note of Gustave's reply I knew he would allow her to miss nothing it lay in his power to explain.

Our seats were somewhere in the middle, Gustave with Mrs. Rogers just in front of the General and myself. No doubt some of the depression I felt found its way into my face, for Mrs. Rogers remarked with a laugh, "I believe my cousin thinks I am like the American who clothed the legs of her piano in petticoats!"

"Oh, no, indeed," I hastened to assure her, "I am only afraid you may be bored. Directly you are, remember I am ready to go."

For I knew that Mrs. Rogers, though at heart a prude of the first water, had a great weakness for being considered up to date—a desire which placed her in many false positions.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Puris om-
nia sunt
pura*

A ventriloquist was showing off his powers as we took our places. Three puppets represented the usual trio in a French drama, lady, lover, and deceived husband, varied afterwards with a second edition reversing the situation, *i. e.*, husband, mistress, and deceived wife. The performer elicited storms of applause for his sparkling wit and humour.

I glanced anxiously at Edith Rogers. The expression of her profile was that of childish enjoyment. With a sigh of relief I murmured to myself, "To the pure all things are pure."

The item following also passed off serenely, notwithstanding that the singer represented a gentleman returning home early in the morning, his song being addressed to the lamp-post, which he mistook for his wife.

"*Ça vous amuse. C'est très drôle, ça, n'est-ce pas ?*" Gustave remarked, with his genial smile, and his neighbour responded heartily.

"*Oh, très drôle* — and so *intensely* French!" She was evidently basking in the idea that she was getting quite an insight into the manners and customs of the French nation.

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

Seeing, however, that the next item on *Frighted* the programme was likely to prove more *with false* disturbing, I suggested we should make a *fire* move. But my idea was rejected with vehemence both by Edith Rogers and our two cavaliers; the General protesting that he had been pining the whole evening for the sight of a certain entrancing lady to appear in No. 11, and Gustave assuring his *Meesus Rôchères* that as yet she had seen nothing *de vrai Parisien*. I resigned myself to the inevitable, and on she came, tripping and bounding with a dexterity really remarkable. I saw Edith Rogers' programme erected between her face and the stage more than once: but a fatal fascination to see what the shameless creature was doing invariably drew the barricade down before long. The dancer ceased mid a torrent of applause which she acknowledged by blowing kisses straight, it seemed to me, at Edith Rogers; but of course they may have been intended for the General, who was seated just behind her.

"To my taste," observed Gustave critically, "too much of *embonpoint* and too much of zeal."

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Frighted with false fire Edith Rogers coughed uneasily; I only heard the words "*beaucoup trop*," the rest being drowned by the General's enthusiasm, which always takes a noisy form.

I made a last attempt to save myself and her — only, however, to be greeted with:

"I am certainly not going until I have heard Yvonne Ribert, and *Les folies de Papa*; Madame Lefèvre said that was best of all.

"There's courage for the good cause! Bravo *Meesus Rôchères*! Let us not fail to taste the cream," cried Gustave, enchanted.

The General asked in dismay whether my friend was feeling herself indisposed, that I should raise the question of departure.

"Oh, no," I said, "but I thought perhaps she had heard enough."

"But me — *I* have not heard enough," he laughed, "no, not until Yvonne has sung again *Les Vieux Messieurs*. *Parbleu*! that fits more than one old scamp of my acquaintance."

The General sipped his *petit verre* with gusto.

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

I did not respond. His remark "gave to think."

*A wolf in
sheep's
clothing*

A stir in the audience, a rapturous greeting, and Yvonne Ribert came forward with her easy, swinging gait and mock-demure air.

"Rather a nice-looking girl, and I'm glad to see she wears a long dress!" remarked Edith Rogers complacently.

Then Yvonne sang. I prayed she might let us down easy for once — but oh, with what diabolical distinctness she rapped out the words! She seemed determined that Edith Rogers should miss nothing. To my unutterable relief, however, there was not even a cough of disapproval, though the assiduous Gustave bought copies of the song that she might follow his translation. Clearly the long dress of the singer had completely reassured her, and she responded to Gustave's jokes with an arch "*Oh, très drôle!*"

What the next item, "*Les folies de Papa,*" might have in store for us, I knew not, but felt that once safely past Yvonne Ribert, she might be left with an easy mind to sit through any number of *folies*.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*A painful
predica-
ment*

A small man came forward and commenced an elaborate apology. He, Monsieur Xersès, was desolated to inform us that Madame Xersès, who was to have assisted him in the little drama announced on the programme, had had the misfortune to contract a toothache which had brought in its train an *accès* of nervous prostration impossible to describe. The dentist was at that moment preparing to extract three of her double teeth behind the curtain. *Messieurs* and *mesdames* would presently hear for themselves the cry of the afflicted one — in proof that he spake the truth. In a little quarter of an hour all would be well and madame would reward their indulgence. Meanwhile Monsieur Xersès precipitated himself upon the charity of the ladies. Would one among them deign to adorn the platform and lend her graceful form as a pendant to his own in some of the little *tours* by which he would seek to distract the audience during the interval of waiting?

His request was greeted with applause, but silence followed; no one moved.

Again Monsieur Xersès spread out two

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

little fat hands and implored some lady to *Disinter-* have pity on him. She had but to sit or *ested as-* stand on this chair which he would lift so *sistance* above his head and balance in his teeth. "It was charming to sit thus elevated," Monsieur Xersès assured us, "one was so well at one's ease."

Presently all heads turned as a quiet-looking young woman came forward from the back of the audience and stepped lightly on to the platform. She must claim the indulgence of *messieurs* and *mesdames*, for this was scarcely her *métier*, but she was unable to witness any longer the pathetic distress of this unfortunate gentleman.

The audience clapped with enthusiasm.

Monsieur Xersès bowed low and thanked her profusely. He then begged she would add to her condescending kindness by removing her hat and cloak as they might be in the way. Was it not so?

The young lady demurred, but finally removed both cloak and hat and sat down, prepared to begin. Monsieur Xersès contemplated her still with a dissatisfied air. He scarcely knew how to make such a request,

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Kindly but this evening — was it not so? — the
concessions weather was of a heat. He appealed to the audience and they clapped encouragingly. *Enfin*, by this heat to wear a *costume de laine*, however charming and becoming, while you were *en train* to assist in athletics made the performance of a difficulty—but a difficulty! The young lady started up.

“Monsieur desires that I remove my dress?” she asked, with wide-eyed, innocent surprise.

Monsieur Xersés literally grovelled with apology and stuck to his petition.

An ominous cough made me glance uneasily at Edith Rogers. Her eyes were fixed in a stony stare on the back of the seat in front of her.

Still I breathed again till I saw Gustave turn to her with beaming face and murmur in her ear what he evidently regarded as a very good joke. I felt disapproval agitating the very roses in her new toque. In vain I tried to get hold of Gustave without attracting her notice. His attention was divided between the lady on the platform and the lady at his side, eager anxiety that

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

the latter should miss none of the proceedings of the former, which proceedings were becoming more embarrassing every moment. The obliging young lady declared that if *messieurs* and *mesdames* would excuse the want of ceremony, and *enfin* if it would facilitate the artistic *tours* of this gentleman she could no longer refuse his request. On her then proceeding to lay aside the *costume de laine* and emerge before us in a scanty white garment (of a simplicity!) I judged the time had arrived to beat a retreat. *A mysterious disappearance*

Lo! Edith Rogers' chair was vacant!

"Where is Mrs. Rogers?" I cried in dismay. Gustave, laughing, clapping, and stamping both feet at once, had that moment turned for sympathy to the empty seat.

He looked at me blankly.

I caught sight of a rigid form retreating to the exit.

"I must go after her at once; follow me presently with Gustave," I said, leaving the General aghast at the suddenness of my departure.

As I made my way to the door, Monsieur Xersés still descanting on the unbelievable

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Adding
insult to
injury*

heat of the evening, a man from the balcony bounded through the air and alighted on the platform.

"Me, I have arrived to put a stop to this intolerable scene!" he shouted furiously. "For me, have I not the right? *Dame!* am I not, then, the husband of this lady?"

Edith Rogers had stopped at the door to listen.

"Come, let us go; it is only nonsense," I said joining her. "They are all in it."

"If *that* is what you call nonsense, I can only say it is what I give a very different name to." She was panting with indignation. "Why, the creature has actually taken off her boots! I pity that poor man if he is her husband! Of course in *this* country one never knows!"

"Do let us come," I cried nervously, not knowing what might be coming off next. "Unless you prefer waiting for the General and Gustave?"

"Wait for those two vulgar men, laughing themselves idiotic over there? No, thank you. But pray don't let me take you away

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

from your French fun!" Edith Rogers' *Outraged*
tone was withering. *propriety*

I assured her I could bear the deprivation with equanimity, and, by way of mitigating the shock she had received, ventured to explain that the lady was of course a trained acrobat already rigged out in the usual costume of such a performer.

But I spoke to one who was as the deaf adder. Walking rapidly in the wrong direction, she delivered herself of a piece of her outraged mind.

"Gustave and the General are just behind; they will be looking for us," I panted at her side.

"Let them look! I never wish to set eyes on that outrageously improper young man again. I thought him a fool at first — nothing worse. It was I who was the fool! Never, no, never, in all my experience, have I been subjected — Oh!" — Words simply failed the poor lady, or rather an overflow all but choked her.

I endeavoured feebly to put in a word or two, not in defence of *cafés chantants*, far be it from me, nor of the arch-offender Gustave,

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Wheels
within
wheels*

but in excuse for my own unwilling complicity in permitting her to go through such an ordeal — in vain. We had walked nearly to the Louvre. Edith Rogers stalked on still, oblivious both of time and place. I hailed a *fiacre*. We parted at her hotel, with some stiffness on both sides.

I found Gustave at the Avenue Friedland, anxiously awaiting my arrival. My account of his *chère Meesus Rôchères'* frame of mind caused him much perplexity. "Me, I thought all marched so well. She would absolutely something of real Parisian, was it not so? *Là voilà, alors!* But it appears she finds herself *un peu shokée*, the poor lady?"

"*Un peu — beaucoup!* She finds you also 'shokin,'" I added consolingly. "And she is very angry with me!"

"With you? Ah, but here is what is too strong," laughed Gustave. "I must go and prostrate myself at her feet to-morrow at an early hour. Ah, my cousin, but I do much for you, know you — and you will not even permit that I tell you how I adore you!"

A CAFÉ CHANTANT

“Not more than once a fortnight — *Misplaced* otherwise, see you, it becomes monotonous. *fervour* Go and repeat it to-morrow to Mrs. Rogers, and make your peace like a good boy.” I have to be very firm with Gustave sometimes, and very aunt-like.

“I obey your commands — I kiss your hand. But you shall not always mock yourself of me, *ma belle cousine* — one day you shall listen to me.” Gustave has an erratic way of becoming suddenly preternaturally serious. I shall not allow him to kiss my hand unless I can break him of that habit. Kissing the hand is a pretty custom, but should always be done in a purely ceremonious and airy fashion. The moment any fervour is put into it, the action to me loses all its charm.

Gustave called the following day twice on his *chère Meesus Rôchères*, but on each occasion he was refused admittance. The day after, on hearing from me that they were leaving in the evening for Switzerland, he called again and left flowers; but he tells me his offering received no acknowledgment.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Love
lightly*

Being, however, both a philosopher and a butterfly, Gustave was soon changing his ties again — with as much frequency and care as ever — for another admiration ; and a very good story I fear he makes out of poor “ *Meesus Rôchères*.”

“A NOBLE MARQUIS”

HE prefers the title of Marquis de *Titles and*
Perpignan, as being less obtrusive, *traffic*
and consequently more convenient,
than that of Duc de la Tour, to which he
has a right, along with three or four lesser
titles, — all, alas, now dissociated from land
or rents. But though not insensible to the
advantage of belonging to a fine old stock,
and inheriting a grand old name, to the
titles themselves he is as sublimely indif-
ferent as the big mastiff I address as *Czar*.

My first meeting with the Marquis was
one morning in the Avenue de l'Opéra.
Madame d'Aville and I had been waiting
our chance to thread a passage across through
the maze of wheels and horses' hoofs, when
an opportunity was suddenly offered by an
obstructing barrow, piled high with cut
firewood, making way for us, the owner
politely standing aside and waiting as we
passed.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*A Patri-
cian Pau-
per* “Ah, the charming boy! *Dieu merci*, we have accomplished our transit in safety,” panted my friend. “Such civility is rare in this city of democrats and anarchists.”

“He had a face good and honest, and a blouse so clean it looked quite distinguished — did you observe?” I asked.

“But yes, I observed his blouse particularly,” said Mémé. “The young man was of a figure admirably well built, and for his manners many a marquis might take them for model. Such an action makes one experience a real affection for the working man! I am persuaded that the lower class are not all savages, ferocious and abominable, ready to devour us, as some people recount.”

This enthusiasm was doomed to suffer some modification, however, later on, first at the hands of an ill-conditioned omnibus conductor, and then a surly cab-driver, whose bloated, purple face at any other time would have been to us a beacon of warning, but to whom, in our new-found confidence, we blindly handed ourselves over for two mortal hours of snail-pace driving at nearly double his due tariff.

“A NOBLE MARQUIS”

Notwithstanding this experience, however, *The “Almost-Son”* the pleasant memory of our young wood-vendor remained with us undimmed, and we wrote the *cocher* and conductor down unusual and unworthy representatives of their class.

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A week later, I was passing the afternoon with Mémé on her Tuesday.

“Allow me to present to you my almost-son, Monsieur le Marquis de Perpignan,” she said. N.B. Mémé has a battalion of adopted nephews and almost-sons, and some new one is continually being sprung upon me.

A big St. Bernard-looking figure drew himself up in front of me and, heels together, bowed low. As he raised his head, cropped like an Axminster carpet, I recognised the young workman whose chivalrous manners and spotless blouse had gone so far towards reconciling me to the Parisian working class.

“I am happy to again have the pleasure of seeing mademoiselle,” he remarked, a twinkle in his eye. Then to Madame

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

The Mar- d'Aville, "Ah, but you were of a pride,
quis Met- dear lady, that day I met you in the Avenue
amor- de l'Opéra! You refused absolutely to rec-
phosed ognise me when I wore the guise of honest
toil. Yet my barrow was very *chic* and my
wood cut to the perfection."

"*Comment donc?* Ah, *mon Dieu*, say then?"

His almost-mother seized him with both little plump hands and peered up into the broad, beaming face. "It is you, you yourself, who are also that young man *en blouse* conducting the barrow of wood?"

"Me, I am all the two," he laughed.

"Ah, but this, this is too strong," cried Mémé. "Recount us then how you found yourself playing that comedy. My young friend here," pointing to me, "is as myself."

"No comedy, dear lady, I assure you. The serious work it was, but very serious. I touched my five francs a day while it lasted! Unhappily an imbecile among my cousins tracked me to the yard and divulged my name to the patron. Ah, then it was all finely finished! The patron he enraged himself at his discovery. He desired no

“A NOBLE MARQUIS”

accursed aristocrats! He had believed me “*Liberty!*
to be an honest boy and behold one had *Equality!*
deceived him! I was but an idle *flâneur*, *Frater-*
masquerading. Useless to repeat that I had *nity!*”
done his work well and that, being in verity
an honest boy, I desired but to continue
chopping and carrying wood. ‘If thou art
a duke, a marquis, heaven knows what in-
fernal noble, go thou to the devil, thou
remainest not here.’ That was my dis-
missal!”

Mémé regarded him in sore perplexity.
“But what shall we do then with this child?”
(The child was about three-and-thirty.) “I
am in the despair! His relations regard
him as a bad subject. He refuses their
counsel and the assistance which would
accompany it. By consequence they have
finished with him.”

“For me, I desire only that they finish
with me; but they finish never,” cried the
marquis. “Always some new idea jumps
them in the head for placing me in a cage
and clipping me the wings. ‘See here, my
nephew,’ says the General de Carbonnière, ‘I
have for thee an excellent position in a bu-

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

The inevitable relative

reau by an ancient friend of mine. Five hundred francs a month — the hours nine till six.' 'Thousand thanks, my uncle,' I reply, 'but I have the liver already too pronounced to remain sitting for nine hours of the day.' Then arrives the Aunt de Franc-Castel. 'Listen, my poor boy, thou hast no mother — I, therefore, will arrange for thee. Here is a marriage which will establish thee; thirty thousand francs of rents; vineyards in the Provence, besides a manufactory superb of bottles in Toulon. Widow of the late fabricator of bottles, Jean Boilleau; excellent woman; admirably well preserved; both daughters married already for years. Desires only a young man of high rank among the old *noblesse* — no matter that he is without the sou!' I repeat the thousand thanks, but it does not smile upon me to take the widow Boilleau in the arms and live in a cage of golden bars. Ah, then my excellent aunt, how she enrages herself! How she repents her goodness for an ingrate — a worth-nothing — a miserable one!"

Mémé shook a warning finger.

"*Fi donc!* But in truth thou art not

“A NOBLE MARQUIS”

prudent. Thirty thousand francs of rents! *Gotham tactics*
And thou who art but a pierced basket to refuse such a fortune even were there ten widow Boilleaus! Reflect then — say never that I did not counsel thee to reflect.”

The only answer from the marquis was a Jove-like roar.

“Behold him!” Mémé turned to me. “He troubles himself for neither man nor woman. His liberty, that is the only thing for which he cares. His relations would have made of him a priest. They send him for three years to the Jesuit College. See the grimace he makes only at the recollection! The Jesuit discipline suits him not. Then they would make of him an officer. He refuses. He will serve his five years as a *piou-piou* (private) rather. But he likes that worse than the priest’s life. When his time is over he seizes a pot of paint and a big brush; with these he promenades himself round the environs of Paris, daubing up the little houses of the work-people—happy as a grasshopper. A character impossible—impracticable, is it not so?”

The little lady’s eyes gleam with a

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

The soldier's lot kindly light on the "impossible character" as he shrugs his broad shoulders and tosses back his Axminster-carpeted head.

"Ah, but that life in full air, sleeping under the fine star, there is the life for a man who respects himself. While for the college of priests it is a prison for the body and the soul. The army is yet worse! No longer are you a man—not even a dog. A machine containing the spirit of a galley-slave, that is what the soldier becomes. Me, I found the means of breathing a little freedom by moments, but it was with a difficulty. I can assure you more than one time I escaped narrowly to find myself at Biribi!"

As I rose to go, I heard Mémé inquiring from the marquis whether he could recommend her an *ordonnance*, namely, one of those often invaluable soldier servants who, with the assistance of a *bonne* sometimes serve as factotum in small establishments.

When I went round there a few days later the door was opened to me by no other than the noble marquis himself.

"He insisted on taking the position until

"A NOBLE MARQUIS"

we could find some one else," explained *The handy* Mémé, "and never have we experienced *man* a so great comfort and repose. The *ménage* runs on oiled wheels. The marquis has for cooking a real genius, he learnt the *métier* serving in the army; he has made of my *bonne*, girl stupid and ignorant, quite a *chef*. He keeps the *parquets* like polished marble, his *batterie de cuisine* is of a cleanliness so scrupulous and conscientious it rejoices the heart. He shakes the carpets with a vigour. He rubs the silver with a heartiness. He brushes the coat of Gustave till he no longer can recognise his ancient *habit*. We shall be miserable, lost ones when he quits us, incapable of again doing anything for ourselves. He declares he would never consent to leave me did not his military service claim him at the end of next month for the twenty-eight days. Figure to yourself, though, what would say his aunt, the Duchesse de Franc-Castel, could she see my new *ordonnance*? She would be more convinced than ever that he is 'a bad subject.' "

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AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Hospital orderly What a priceless treasure this "bad subject" could be I had full proof not long after.

Gustave came round early one morning to tell us his mother was very ill, — the *grippe* together with a *fluxion de poitrins*, sudden as it was serious. The evening before, though she felt herself like a *mourante*, she had insisted on dining with the Lefèbres, who were staying a month at Passy. She had brought back the *p'tit chou*, who as usual refused to be parted from her Mémé. They had all passed "a night abominable." The marquis, said Gustave, had been their one support and consolation — he had made cataplasms, he had concocted *tisanes*, he had rocked to sleep the excited little *chou*, and had at break of day gone for Louis Lefèbre, who is a doctor and the only one Mémé is afraid to disobey. He and Thérèse were with her now — poor Thérèse in an atrocious anxiety. It would comfort her if I would come!

Poor Gustave! he was quite *bouleversé* by worry and anxiety himself. As with most French sons, the tie between him and his mother is peculiarly close. If she is ill he

“A NOBLE MARQUIS”

watches over her day and night with an absolute devotion. I have often noticed the truest and best affection of a Frenchman is given to his mother, and there is no doubt who invariably occupies the throne in her heart. I never saw the husband, however devoted, who did not play a poor second to his boy, if he had one. *Too many cooks*

I lost no time in going with Gustave, and Uncle Jack called after us: “Perrette will come round in a few minutes to see if she cannot help the marquis with the cata-plasms!”

But we did not want any addition to the crowd of assistants and advisers I found on arriving at Mémé’s *appartement*. Seven people were standing round the bed, Mouton, the toy spaniel, was barking savagely as he tore one of her slippers to pieces, while the little *chou*, never inactive, was running a tin express-train up and down the *parquet* floor. French voices are pitched high as compared with English, and seven going at once produce the effect of a busy market-place.

Poor Mémé looked from one to the other with glittering eyes and pink cheeks.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Many
hands*

Louis Lefèvre was saying, "One must absolutely have silence — there is too much noise here," but he never suggested that six out of the seven people should leave the room.

I implored Thérèse to send away some of us.

"Oh, Mémé loves to have us all near her. She is so fond of company, *la pauvre chérie*. But Louis is leaving presently," (the only one we want, I thought), "and the *bonne* and Julie can go to the kitchen. You see here are Madame Thomé and Mademoiselle Duclos—I send for Madame Thomé always when there is the illness, she plays so willingly the role of *garde-malade*—she will stay and pass the night. Mademoiselle Duclos, from her *appartement* below, she heard all the *tapage*, and like an angel of goodness came up with her maid in the middle of the night. You are a good darling to have come also. Mémé has been asking for you."

It struck me I should have been more of a "good darling" had I stayed away.

Madame Thomé is one of Mémé's army

“A NOBLE MARQUIS”

of pensioners. Widow of a penniless officer, *Desperate* she lives on the modest revenue obtained *remedies* from a newspaper *kiosk* allowed her by the government, supplemented by the gifts of Mémé. For years it has been her custom to dine with the d’Ailles every Monday — a wonderful testimony this to the greatness of Mémé’s goodness, for there is something singularly exhausting about poor Madame Thomé. At the bedside she was a fixture, that was clear. So also was the worthy Mademoiselle Duclos who, with much animated conversation, was taking the orders from the doctor.

The marquis, seeing how many we were, vanished, telling me he was at hand when needed. I seized on Gustave. “Go,” I said, “and buy some night-lights, also some flannel, some caraway seeds, some linseed, some *eau de lavendre*, and an air cushion. They will be needed.” I wrote these things down at haphazard with the sole object of getting at least one out of the way for a time. (I would have gone myself, but both Mémé and Thérèse implored me to remain.) Gustave never questioned the necessity of

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

The chou the purchases, he has too much reverence
on duty for my wisdom on all subjects. He went like a lamb. I suggested his niece should accompany him, and Thérèse seconded the idea, but *le p'tit chou* declined firmly. "*Non pas* — me, I leave not my Mémé. Go thou alone, Gustave, or I will make thee a scene, and then the poor Mémé she will have another crisis!"

"Ah, naughty one," said her mother, "if you loved your Mémé you would be kind to her and fan her as does your *cousine Béty*, see!"

It was an unlucky speech. I was keeping off the mosquitoes and flies which were very troublesome, but I had to decamp now before the worst mosquito of all. "Me, I will fan my Mémé. Give the fan!" commanded the little *chou*.

"Say 'if you please,'" whispered poor Mémé, with a grateful look to me as I seated this imperious nurse by her side with many injunctions. "I am so anxious about the dear child," she added. "She has been drinking my medicine. Here I can watch her."

“A NOBLE MARQUIS”

Madame Thomé was keeping up an excited conversation with Mademoiselle Duclos, who was preparing the numerous concoctions and poultices prescribed by the doctor. *The dispute of the doctors* “In the last attack we put for her twice that quantity ; even then it was not sufficient. Thérèse, my child, see here, your husband has deceived himself—what a misfortune he has departed!”

Mademoiselle Duclos refuses absolutely to put more drops. Madame Thomé appeals to us all, and the invalid takes part in the discussion. At the height of the argument the *femme de ménage* comes in to say Monsieur le Marquis desires to know how many of *ces dames* will remain to breakfast.

Thérèse and her mother hospitably insisted on all remaining. I firmly declined, saying my uncle was expecting me and also Gustave.

On returning in the afternoon I found three more visitors had been admitted. Thérèse declared it to be unavoidable ; they would have been so wounded had they been refused admittance to the bedroom of their dear old friend when she was suffering!

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

A council of war Why, there was Général de Villeneuve who had come all the way from Passy !

I sought out the marquis. "I am in the despair," I confided to him. "If it continues, this bedroom reception, Madame d'Aville will have more fever and will die—very surely she will die. Will you guard well the door and say to every one who arrives, every one, I pray you, that it is forbidden absolutely for the invalid to see one sole person, that the doctor will be of a fearful anger if any one is admitted?"

"Mademoiselle may have confidence in me. I learnt when I was in the army how to keep the enemy out of a besieged city."

The marquis kept his word. He gave mortal offence to several of Mémé's "ancient friends," who afterwards made bitter complaint to Thérèse, but we held them at bay for the first week at least and saved Mémé's life in consequence, according to my humble opinion. As it was, things would have proved quite too much for any ordinary sick person this side the Channel, but the French temperament is astonishingly different, and what to us would be an unbearable

“A NOBLE MARQUIS”

pandemonium is to them just the ordinary *Drastic*
cheery atmosphere of a sick room. *measures*

Two other victories achieved by the marquis showed him a man of infinite resource and masterly executive power. He eliminated those two terrible evils from our sick room — the little *chou* and the little dog. After the patient's second sleepless, delirious night, the little *chou* was suddenly invalided home in charge of her faithful Julie. She was not poisoned as this might suggest, but the marquis had lavished upon her his choicest “*plats*” with, I fear, a “back-thought” which would have given both Mémé and Thérèse a bad “crisis” had they suspected it.

The following day “Mouton,” the terrier, who resembled the *chou* in disqualifications for a sick room, *i.e.*, a piercing treble, a restless habit of jumping up and down on the bed, and an obdurate disregard of all wishes but his own, was conveyed, closely muffled, to the *gare de Lyons* and dispatched to the farm of Julie's brother, there to enjoy a few weeks' country air. All attempts to keep him away from his mistress had proved futile. I had repeatedly taken him home

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Universal with me, but he invariably eluded Perrette
panacea and Uncle Jack, and, like the historic "Snarleyow," turned up again.

Mémé's illness was a serious one, but no trained nurse was considered necessary till the fourth day, when another doctor, called in for consultation, pronounced the case very grave and advised a *garde-malade*. Till then we had divided the nights between us, two at a time mounting guard. Poor old Thomé manfully took even more than her share, but she insisted on drinking all the medicines that were over, and I think they or the leeches knocked her up at last. Waste was her *bête noire*, or thrift her strong point, whichever way one likes to put it.

"Impossible to permit excellent remedies like these to be thrown away," she said. "I prefer to take them myself; they are sure to benefit for one thing if not for the other."

"But," I suggested, "they might perhaps do you some hurt, madame!"

"Do some hurt! But impossible, my poor mademoiselle! Expensive remedies like these prepared by le Conte, in one of

"A NOBLE MARQUIS"

the first pharmacies of Paris! I could "*Garde-*
answer for it as for my own *cuisine*; it would *malade*"
be a real crime to throw away such good *Gamp*
ingredients!"

With regard to the leeches which were prescribed, but by our patient firmly rejected, Madame Thomé used the same argument, and I was so thankful to see the horrible creatures go, I fear I did nothing on this occasion to dissuade her.

As for the *garde*, she turned out a serious incumbrance, needing as she did, constant nourishment and repose. She was, besides, a terrible anxiety to the patient. It was perpetually, "Madame Bompert, say then, have you breakfasted well?" "Make a good repast — take plenty of wine" (a most superfluous injunction), or "Say, then, have they cared for you well, Madame Bompert? Did you repose yourself?"

In her delirium poor dear Mémé imagined herself the *garde* and Madame Bompert the patient. She insisted on continually feeling her pulse, implored her not to refuse the pills, and once while the overfed Bompert slept heavily by her side, removed the mustard

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*A king
without a
heritage* plaster and woke her by placing it on her ample bosom.

Gamps and Priggs may have become extinct in England, but at least one specimen of the tribe still blossoms as the rose in Paris. We felt many tons of anxiety removed when the *fiacre* rattled off with the portly form of Madame Bompert at the end of a week.

That illness of Mémé's called forth my admiration and affection for the marquis to such a degree, I would gladly have endowed him with the half of my kingdom had I possessed a kingdom, and had I not already given the whole of all I do possess elsewhere.

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It was not till the following spring that I was again in Paris. I inquired at once for news of *le marquis*, as we always call him. Mémé seldom writes, and her letters, even when begun, generally remain half finished in her blotter, so that news filters but imperfectly through that channel. Uncle Jack is no better, for he invariably keeps "all news till we meet." At the mention of *le marquis*, Mémé bubbled with excitement.

“A NOBLE MARQUIS”

“ Ah, the charming boy, but he has fallen *Poète de*
well ! Figure to yourself he has just made *cuisine*
a handsome marriage ! But a marriage
superb. I will recount to you the history,
which is a romance — an idyl — a true poem.
But my letter, you did not receive it, *ma*
chérie ? And the marquis he spoke so often
of you and desired so much you should
attend the wedding ! He has married the
daughter of Grogan, of the big restaurant,
Boulevard des Italiens.”

“ Of Grogan ! ” I exclaimed. “ Where
does the poetry come in ? Does the daugh-
ter follow her father’s *métier* and concoct
poems in truffles and oysters ? ”

I was astonished and disappointed at
Mémé’s enthusiasm ; to me this sounded
a dismally prosaic ending for our noble
marquis.

“ Ah, you mock yourself of me, my Betty,
but listen and you shall hear all. It appears
that one day an old friend of the marquis’s
father, certain Monsieur Millefleurs, finding
himself interested in our young friend, invited
him to dine at Grogan’s. At seven o’clock
behold our young man arrive. He had

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Another breakfasted on twelve *sous* and brought with
Tantalus him a hunger of the wolf. Millefleurs has not arrived, but one conducts him to a table, the covers prepared for a pretty little *tête-à-tête*. An excellent *menu*, which even to run through creates an exquisite appetite. He regards the clock with anxiety. Slowly the hands move to seven o'clock and half. Still no Millefleurs. He calls the *garçon*. 'But yes, certainly, the dinner was commanded for seven o'clock — there is no error. But alas! the *filet de soles, sauce hollandaise* is losing its first youth; the *entrée bouchées à la reine* will soon be unrecognisable. Shall he not serve? It is sure the monsieur would prefer his friend to commence to eat.' But with energy the marquis refuses to be served in advance. Eight o'clock sounds like the bell of a cemetery in the ears of our poor one. Nothing of Millefleurs! He paces up and down, the hunger devouring him to the point rendering foolish. From his heart he curses the perfidious Millefleurs, together with all ancient friends of his father. Now arrives no less a person than Monsieur Grogan, the patron; he

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suggests with firmness that monsieur should delay no longer to be served. Very surely some accident has befallen his friend — without doubt by this heat, being a gentleman of a great corpulence, he has been overtaken by a crisis of apoplexy or perhaps an automobile has gone over him and crushed him; such things are occurring with a frequency to cause no longer any surprise. In all the cases, that a repast of such merit should simmer miserably to an unhappy end, this was not to be contemplated.

“ ‘Speak not to me of that dinner, I supplicate you,’ cried the poor one, by this time at the end of his forces; ‘I cannot eat the dinner of this Monsieur Millefleurs for the reason that I cannot pay for it. Behold my entire fortune!’ ” And he empties the pockets of a few miserable francs. ‘Leave me quiet. Till nine o’clock I wait. Then I save myself and make my supper by the baker *en face*.’

“With this he resumes his promenade: but in a few minutes there is Grogan, who returns once more with a good smile on the face.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*A bargain
with the
Fates*

“ ‘ Listen, my brave boy,’ he says, ‘ I am persuaded that your friend is not for to-night. Whether he still survives, the good God alone knows. But for you I have a proposition to make. To-night we have here a grand ball, — supper of the highest class. I need an intelligent boy to assist me. These others, they are but animals — imbeciles, not worth four *sous*. My chief assistant is fallen ill with the accursed grippe. I have observed thee — thou hast fortitude and a good character — thou art an honest boy, never do I make an error. Eat the dinner while still it can be retired from the pots. I offer thee a good bottle of wine also to make it easily descend. If thou consent to remain and assist me, I am well paid.’

“ Joyfully our marquis closes with the bargain. This was, then, the step that decided his destiny. For the entire night he worked like a regiment of sappers. The *père* Grognan is ravished with his new assistant, and when he refuses the lous he offers as they part at five o’clock, the old one insists on drinking champagne with him, and falls on his neck.

“A NOBLE MARQUIS”

“‘Come thou again on Wednesday,’ he *Mademoiselle and the marquis* cries, ‘we have yet another ball.’ On the Wednesday, behold a young girl, charming and seductive, who appears at the side of her father, Mademoiselle Grognan, just returned from the convent, where she has received an excellent education. You can guess what follows. Our marquis loses the heart hopelessly ‘on the field.’ Mademoiselle regards him with eyes downcast, which perceive all the same quite clearly that he is a young man very well — very well, indeed. The old Grognan, meanwhile, sly fox, clever as ten Jesuits, has burrowed up the information, God knows how, that this boy, who refuses his louis, declaring himself already generously paid by the dinner, is a noble with the title of Marquis, Duc, Comte, et cetera, et cetera, whose lands were unhappily lost in the German war. He has one weakness, our Grognan — it is for the old noblesse — the blue blood of France. Before they part on that second evening, behold our marquis betrothed to Mademoiselle Marthe, with a *dot* of fifteen hundred thousand francs. Old Grognan, besides, has bought back the

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*“Cooks and
dukes and
son of a
million-
aire”* property in Auvergne and is rebuilding and furnishing the château for the young people to dwell in, his only stipulation that his son-in-law shall resume the title of Duc de la Tour.

“Say, then, has he not fallen well, our dear bad subject?”

I could not deny it sounded well in many respects, so I went at once and bought him a wedding present, which I sent with my best blessing. Since then I have met the little bride, and been able, conscientiously, to congratulate the Duc de la Tour on his good fortune.

"MADAME MARCELLE"

(*Hautes Modes*)

BEFORE I go further I must in- *The*
troduce my friend, Madame Mar- *crowning*
celle. She is associated with my *mercy*
earliest memories of Paris, and is one of
the first people I look up on arriving. I
owe her a good deal besides the little ac-
count which she always assures me "presses
not," for, as she is fond of observing, "that
which you place on the head sounds the key-
note of the whole personality."

Can anything, therefore, exceed the gravity
and the importance of the office of your
milliner? Madame Marcelle goes even
further, and declares that the character
itself is as powerfully affected by the object
placed in such close proximity to the brain,
as is the health of the body by the quality
of your food.

"In this manner it was," says madame,
"that the ancient stupid custom of posing

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

“ Rather masculine and stately ” on a child’s head the bonnet of a dunce soon rendered the unhappy one an imbecile for whom there remained no hope.” And again, “ Take, for example, your fashion in England of the young ladies who wear the hats of the men — produces it not its effect very surely ? The voice, the walk, the hair uncoifed, sometimes even cut quite short. Me, I have remarked often these ladies so masculine, their books of Baedeker under the arm. There have been occasions when in passing them in the street I have even said, ‘ pardon, monsieur,’ and in good faith.”

I remember reading somewhere among the works of one of our greatest living writers a curious corroboration of Madame Marcelle’s theory. He says that the most pronounced radical cannot resist the influence of a coronet on his brow ; that even a few hours of it will revolutionise the entire contents of his brain ! Perhaps some of Marcelle’s creations are responsible for developments in my character not wholly desirable ; on the other hand, she may have saved me from worse which might have befallen had my head been covered by the

"M A D A M E M A R C E L L E"

"Billy-cock" of my brother, or a Barchester "*Nothing milliner's chef d'œuvre. too much*"

Madame Marcelle is an artist. No one who has seen her creations can be in any doubt on that point. She has her inspirations, her dreams and visions, her ideals.

To strike the *juste milieu* to a nicety is madame's gift *par excellence*. Through the mist of—well, we won't say how many years—I can still see my first Marcelle *chapeau*,—an ivory Panama, framing the face in exquisite curves and bends, revealing just enough, and never too much, of the proud wearer. The *garniture* nothing save a broad ribbon twisted cunningly into one large bow, the very simplicity of which showed the artist. A *chapeau de fillette*—*pas trop enfant, en même temps pas trop demoiselle*. And I can hear madame's satisfied—"It is well that! See now, madame, how mademoiselle has the air of a flower of the springtime, fresh, but of a freshness, a youth! Ah, but how the youth it is exquisite at that age there!"

For Madame Marcelle is both a poet and a flatterer. She has a theory, too, that it is

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

“*Know the opportunity*” absolutely necessary, when trying on hats, to look happy. Come to her with a secret grief, or a toothache, and she tells you it is useless, at such a time, to choose wisely or well.

I arrived one day just as a *triste* little blonde lady was stepping into her carriage.

“*Cette pauvre dame*, I have told her to return to-morrow morning,” said Madame Marcelle. “What will you? How shall I choose for that dear lady a *convenable chapeau* while she wears a mien so dolorous! Impossible, *mon Dieu!* I should find myself placing on her head a chaplet of ivy leaves, suitable for an early tomb.”

I suggested perhaps she would be no better on the morrow.

“Oh, but certainly, yes. She has confided to me her chagrin. It is always a new *escapade* of monsieur, her husband, see you; but she has happily the heart very light. By to-morrow it shall pass, it shall trouble her no more. I say to her: ‘Courage, dear Comtesse! If the woman is not philosopher she is lost. *Du reste*, you have always your child and *la toilette*. Thanks to *le bon Dieu*, who has thought

"MADAME MARCELLE"

of everything, *la toilette* is for us poor "Know women a great consolation and distraction. *thyself*" Had it not been for my *chapeaux, tiens*, there are already fifty times I should have made myself *religieuse*.' "

Madame Marcelle is a mistress in the art of getting her own way. Let none of her *clientèle* flatter themselves that they are at liberty to enter those sacred precincts and there select according to their own irresponsible fancy. As well might one of the great Frédéric's famous ducks think to choose his own sauce on finding himself in the Tour d'Argent.

Not long since I took a cousin, one of the "birds of passage" who occupy so much of the time I in vain design for more congenial pursuits, to choose a hat at Madame Marcelle's. Louisa was passing through Paris with an aunt, and the latter begged me to find her "a decent hat," while she herself whiled away a morning with the dentist. By "decent" she meant something that would pass muster at Aix, whither they were bound.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

A cathedral-caterpillar I felt there was only one person to be trusted with the ticklish task of perching a French hat on Louisa's head and still preserving the air of her being "in her own frame."

Louisa is unmistakably, uncompromisingly British. She possesses the solid virtues of her race, and also "the defects of her qualities": a well-built, square figure, planted on large, square feet; thick, red-brown hair, guiltless of all waywardness or coquetry; a fresh, healthy complexion, and a firm, square jaw indicating a tenacity of purpose which the ill-natured call "pig-headed." Her twenty-two years have been mostly spent in the select and somewhat restricted atmosphere of the close of a cathedral town in the midlands, her father being a much respected dignitary of the church. Louisa's outlook on life is not unlike that of Mrs. Gatty's parabolic caterpillar nibbling round his world of cabbage leaf. I do not mean this in any way as reflecting on Louisa, for, after all, are we not all caterpillars on cabbage leaves, of various sizes, and unable to get out of the

“M A D A M E M A R C E L L E”

kitchen garden till we grow our wings? I can see Louisa regards the particular leaf on which I browse with very mixed feelings; a plant of foreign growth must be approached with distrust, however attractive its appearance; but the eternal feminine in Louisa is not wholly impervious to the allurements of Paris. On her third day in the gay city she spent two hours among the bead chains in the Magasins du Louvre!

*The
French
cabbage
leaf*

Madame Marcelle was engaged with two fair Americans as we entered.

Louisa and I looked round and waited.

The standard of Barchester High Street sternly condemned the style of Marcelle as “too peculiar” and “too exaggerated.”

“That’s the only thing here that would suit me!” she said, pointing to a small child’s hat in the corner — large pompons of white lise alternated with bunches of Marguerites.

I smiled, but made no answer, feeling she would soon be in more capable hands than mine.

Meanwhile I heard madame’s ringing voice announcing the most staggering prices,

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*The al-
mighty
dollar*

as it seemed to me, to the fair Americans. But they translated the francs into dollars and bore the announcement with wonderful equanimity, ordering six of the hats piled up around them. Then one turning to her friend with, "Well, I guess these ain't the only pebbles on the beach, we'll come right along now to that Roo Riverly store!" they took their departure.

Madame's sunny face of good-will and humorous discernment was turned towards us.

"A thousand pardons, mesdames!"

"Ah, but you will be in no mood for us," I cried. "The charming Americans must have quite demoralised you!"

"Mademoiselle heard then my American prices!" she laughed. "My faith, what will you!" She shrugged her shoulders. "Those ladies would never believe my hats were the *dernier cri* did I charge a sou less."

I introduced my cousin.

"Ah, one can see well without hearing the name so distinguished that mademoiselle is English. I have for that nation a respect

“M A D A M E M A R C E L L E”

the most profound,” said madame, with a *Premature* deep bow. “Without doubt mademoiselle *pre-ferment* speaks French perfectly?” she inquired.

“*Très peu — j’aime mieux l’Anglais,*” answered Louisa, conscious of the rectitude of her preference.

Madame Marcelle replied with her gay little laugh.

“Ah, but that is very well said; that, mademoiselle, has reason. *Tiens*, she prefers the English tongue, but the French hat, is it not so?”

And madame looked up with such a beguiling smile, Louisa’s British coldness was feign to thaw a few degrees.

“*J’aime beaucoup ce chapeau là!*” she said, indicating the one of her choice.

“*Ah, le p’tit chapeau de bébé*, he is nice, is he not? When mademoiselle is a young mother, she will bring her beautiful *bébé* to find here his first hat—is it not so? But now,” she went on with a twinkling eye as she noticed Louisa’s scarlet cheek, “we must find something *de vrai Parisien* for mademoiselle herself—*le cher petit bébé* can well wait for the moment *n’est-ce pas?*”

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

The gambler's talisman *Mademoiselle est fiancée ?* " she turned to me inquiringly. I shook my head.

" Ah, not as yet. *Voyons*, then we shall choose our hat with much care, with much discretion. It is the verity pure that I tell mademoiselle, and her cousin will confirm what I say, the hats of Thérèse Marcelle are famous for the good luck they bring to those who wear them ! "

I nodded encouragingly, and madame went on :

" There is, for example, the Marquise de Fleury, for three years *en suite* she is suffering losses the most crushing at the Grand Prix. This year she came to me : ' Madame Marcelle, give me one of your famous creations for the Grand Prix. If I make my game on the right horse this time, I am yours until the death. My friend, Madame de Perrière-Picon declares that your hats are for her always *mascotte*. Who knows they may be for me also ? ' ' *Soit, madame,* ' I reply, I search, I reflect, I find her colour, and *voilà* Madame la Marquise who touches last Sunday her five hundred thousand francs at Longchamps ! "

"MADAME MARCELLE"

I trembled for the effect of this story on *Madame* Louisa. But happily for all parties, she *Mar-* had quite failed to follow madame's voluble *celle's* flow and was regarding the little woman with *incanta-* a tolerant smile. Madame took this for *tions* encouragement, and proceeded to relate other extraordinary instances where her *chapeaux* had been the direct cause of blessing and good fortune, above all in achieving conquests and bringing about favourable alliances for *les jeunes demoiselles*.

"If we can find the right combination for that superb tint of hair, who knows what may be in store for this charming young lady!"

"What on earth does she mean?" asked Louisa in bewilderment.

"Oh, nothing," I answered casually. "She only wishes to help you to make a good marriage. The French are so obliging, you know. She is always finding me a husband, and though I have not settled on one yet, I have promised not to marry without first consulting her!"

"What an extraordinary woman! Is she mad?"

Poor Louisa was blushing hotly.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Art for I assured her not more mad than we all
Art's sake are in Paris. "You won't know yourself,"
I said, "when Madame Marcelle has perched
one of her *chefs d'œuvre* on your sober head!
You will feel a little mad, too."

"Ravishing! Admirable! Advance him
just a little more on the forehead, Made-
moiselle Simon," cried madame to one of her
young ladies, as she herself stood back a
few paces the better to judge the effect of
the transformation on Louisa. "Now,
Mademoiselle Clotilde, bring quick a fine
white veil of a texture soft and cloudlike.
Ah, we are there! See now how made-
moiselle begins to take an air altogether
coquette, altogether Parisian!"

"I hope to goodness I don't," cried
Louisa in dismay. Then looking at her
reflection in the mirrors all around her:
"Oh, I could never go about with this on.
Fancy if father could see me! Oh, yes, I
daresay Aunt Kate will like it, but father
would say I was tricked out like a Jezebel,
I know he would. That veil makes me
look as though my face were powdered and
painted."

“MADAME MARCELLE”

“Mademoiselle is not contented? She *A gay* does not find herself charming in that little *cleric chapeau?*” asked madame anxiously.

“*J’aime mieux quelque chose plus tranquille,*” said Louisa, hurriedly removing the offending headgear, while I hastened to explain to the amiable little *artiste* that my cousin, being the daughter of a noted divine, had to dress in a manner characteristic of her father’s solemn position and the prominent ecclesiastical circle in which she moved.

Madame’s sympathising face expressed heartfelt condolence together with a brave determination to make the best of it.

“Perfectly, dear lady, perfectly; I am there! Without doubt the hat must then have a suspicion of the serious idea. *Mais de grâce pas trop sérieux!* It is that I forget always the strange and curious custom of the marriage among the priests of your country! To us, you understand well, there is something *un peu shokin* in speaking of the daughter of a *monseigneur*. For example, the beautiful Madame de Condés, one mentions her always, *always* as the ‘niece’ of his Eminence.”

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*The of-
fending
bat*

Mercifully the French of Madame Marcelle and that of Louisa have about as much resemblance as the chirruping of a house-sparrow to the mooing of a sober cow.

"She speaks so fast I can't make out a word!" remarked Louisa, with some annoyance.

I replied sympathetically that it *was* difficult at first.

"Mademoiselle Clotilde, bring here the *chapeau noir* garnished with roses *la reine*," cried madame, with a burst of new hope. "*Tenez*, mademoiselle, you have here all that monsieur your uncle, pardon, monsieur your father, I would say, could desire of most discreet, yet in the same moment of most *chic*, with a quite little suggestion of *coquetterie* subtle and illusive, that which will often accomplish more with *les messieurs*," added madame knowingly, "than a *toilette voyante* and audacious!"

"Dear Madame Marcelle," I broke in, "it is useless to try and make my cousin *coquette*. She has them in horror, the *coquettes*, see you! And for all men she possesses a grand contempt. So we must

"MADAME MARCELLE"

find her a hat that will please herself, must *Nil des-
we not?*" *perandum*

"Ah, but here are ideas that give to think!" cried Madame Marcelle delighted, "ideas strongly original! One sees well at the first stroke of the eye that mademoiselle is not of the type ordinary. Certainly she will one day be a remarkable character — *une femme hors ligne.*"

Placing another work of art reverently on Louisa's head, madame retreated backwards a few steps.

"Now look one little moment, mademoiselle, in this mirror, does not that please you? Do you not find yourself quite ravishing?"

Louisa regarded herself with an expression of settled melancholy. She sighed, and then observed in slow, laboured French:

"Je crois que cela sera mieux avec plumes noires et sans roses."

Madame Marcelle raised both little fat hands in horror.

"Des plumes noires! Mon Dieu, mademoiselle, it is not because monsieur your father is *monseigneur* that you should prome-

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

An idea sinister and moribund made forever among the tombs? *Des plumes noires.* Oh-la-la, here is an idea sinister and moribund! But if mademoiselle has a fancy for plumes, bring quick those two white hats, from the *caisse*, Mademoiselle Clotilde."

With endless patience and apparent enjoyment of the task, madame and her young ladies produced a bewildering choice of plumed hats, each perfect in its way. I longed in turn to take them all, but Louisa was stronger minded. At last, however, a hat was found, *très distingué, très comme il faut* — a creation in simple black and white, approved of by Louisa on condition that the plumes were made to lower their lofty, waving heads. Poor Madame Marcelle groaned as she gave the desired order in a greatly modified form.

"One can always make them again to mount," she said aside to me, "should mademoiselle become more reconciled to the ideas of Paris."

"And now, *chère* Madame Marcelle, for the price. You are going to make us the price very soft, are you not?"

"*Voilà, chère* mademoiselle, we are ancient

"M A D A M E M A R C E L L E"

friends, therefore I make you always *un prix d'amie* well understood. See, now, we will *d'amie* say for this little hat, which I will confide to you is of the first quality, not more than one hundred francs. You understand well that is a nothing — a little nothing. The true price, *entre nous*, is one hundred and fifty."

"One hundred francs!" cried Louisa in dismay. "You don't mean to say that is the price?"

I pointed out that there were five very good feathers, but begged her cheer up and we would see what could be done. I inquired how much she wished to give.

"Well," said Louisa sadly, "I can generally get a very nice hat in Barchester for twenty-five shillings. I thought it might be more here, but, oh, nothing like that!"

"Now, *chère* mademoiselle, permit that I find something for you," cried Madame Marcelle, who had stood beaming on us during the past, to her, unintelligible dialogue. "You will require something *très chic* for the *gardine pâti* of the Marquise Saint-Ives. The young Comtesse de l'Abbadie

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

The temptress' art was here yesterday and made her choice, assisted by a monsieur who, it appears, attends her everywhere in this moment. One raises the eyebrow already; let us hope later on we have no scandal! Ah, but me, I predict very surely one will have there a history."

"Did they choose well?" I asked, steering her off the beguiling, but dangerous, shoals of gossip; "a monsieur is sometimes a great assistance, and you it is who have often said it."

"Oh, not too badly," allowed madame, reluctantly following my lead. "But *voyons donc, chère mademoiselle*, your costume, of what style is she?"

"No, no, Madame Marcelle, *de grâce*, tempt me not," I cried, knowing her power and my own weakness, not to mention the emptiness of my purse. "The hat I wore for the Grand Prix will serve admirably well for the garden party to-morrow."

"Oh, *fi donc, chère demoiselle*, but that hat there is already ancient history. He has served well, is it not so? Ah, but me, I have heard how your *toilette* at the Grand

"MADAME MARCELLE"

Prix, and also at the reception of the Palais de Bourbon made itself admired by all the world. *Mais si !* Me, I hear all, see you. But," and madame changed her tone to one of solemn warning, "one must take well care not to too much fatigue the eye with the same picture. *Le bon Dieu* Himself see how well He studies it, this point : He gives to us a sunrise ; good, but not for all the day a sunrise ; quickly He changes the scene — new colours, new combinations, not only for each season of the year, but for each hour of the day. So with *la toilette* ; the variety, the change, that is what pleases, what enchants, above all, with we other Parisians. And when one is young," — madame raised both little hands piously, — "the good God desires we use well the youth, so quickly it passes. This is your moment ; the beautiful hats are made for the beautiful youth ; would you then wear through all the season one unhappy *chapeau*, as if it had taken root in the hairs ? With your charming mien, your gifts so many — " and here madame began to spread the butter, even I, who can stand a good deal of it,

Take nature for thy teacher

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

The serpent beguiles must confess, rather thickly. I could see Louisa was making a mental note that the French nation are addicted to gross exaggeration, if not positive untruth.

The argument, however, that finally overcame me was that of economy. This hat, with very slight alteration, would do for the half season, either spring or autumn. It would, therefore, obviously save my buying two other hats in the future. "One must always look forward, is it not so?" said Madame Marcelle with a preternaturally prudent air, "for the *toilette* as for everything else in life."

Who could resist such eloquent arguments, especially when the speaker approached with a perfect dream of beauty, which she insisted on placing where it certainly did look rather nice!

"And see, to give you pleasure," went on the temptress, "I will make the hat of mademoiselle you cousin a bagatelle — absolutely a little nothing of seventy-five francs, since it is her first *chapeau Parisien*. *Voilà!* I have said it!"

“MADAME MARCELLE”

I am a feeble person — most of us are — *The ser-*
in Madame Marcelle's hands. She came *pent wins*
off triumphant in this, as in all past encoun-
ters, and we parted with many *au revoirs*
and *mille amitiés* on both sides.

“A SAPPHO OF THE SALON”

A beautiful blue-stocking

MÉMÉ has never quite approved of my great friendship with Odille — Princesse Odille, as she is generally known among her large circle of admiring friends, “Princesse” being a courtesy title she earned after her admirable representation of Rostand’s “Princesse Lointaine,” at Madame de Fleury’s, three years ago.

“If it were only that she is poet, plays the comedy, gives the recitation, that could make itself pardoned,” concedes Mémé. “The little volume, ‘Dreams of the Lotus,’ it is *chic*, very *chic*, the cover is delicious, though frankly for the verses me I find them little better than the Chinese. But for a young girl (the epithet is elastic) who makes herself *féministe*, — who mixes herself in the socialism, the philosophy, and the ideas *bizarres* of those Messieurs Ibsène, Tolstoy, Nietsche, et cetera, et cetera. *Oh-la-la!* me I have all that in horror. For the rest

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

you see well she marries herself not, your *Better to*
Odille; the affairs, the affairs always, but *have*
no husband!" *loved . . .*

Odille's sudden marriage the other day did little to weaken Mémé's standing argument, for being a rather unusual marriage it failed to range Odille satisfactorily with the normal woman and leaves her still, in Mémé's judgment, a freak.

If a woman shall gain the whole world and lack a husband her life is *manquée*, holds Mémé. In spite of Odille's social success and brilliant gifts, in spite, too, of an ideally happy home, hers was, according to Mémé, *une vie manquée*, since "she married herself not," and Odille had sounded her thirty-five!

"But what if a woman marries one who suits her not at all? Is her life not worse than *manquée*, burnt up, with nothing save ashes to show?" I ventured one day to suggest, not without trepidation, for a discreet silence veils the memory of the long-departed spouse of Mémé, and I am uncertain where I may be treading.

"Better a life burnt than a life missed,"

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Love and Life replies Mémé. "A husband who suits not too well, as one may say, that is what *le bon Dieu* sends to most women. It is the folly pure to expect that every woman she shall obtain a husband perfect; as well think to gain the *gros lot*, for that one must await the Paradise. But the woman who has her child, she has not missed her life."

Remembering the pride and happiness Mémé has fortunately always found in her Gustave and Thérèse, to say nothing of that crowning joy, her grandchild, the *p'tit chou*, I own she has reason. But my friend Odille's views on life are diametrically opposed to those of Mémé. She could never find compensation in an infant Gustave for the mortal *ennui*, to say nothing else, that it would cause her to put up with an average sort of husband. Not that she lacks the maternal instinct, but it shows itself in her under another form. For years she lavished a truly maternal affection on a most unworthy lover — a morally weak-kneed young genius with a Byronic turn of the head. The more unworthy he proved himself, the more devoted and self-sacrificing grew

“A SAPPHO OF THE SALON”

Odille's love for him. “The poor boy, *Love and Death* he needs that my love should be strong and great, the better to support him,” she said.

She has a theory that all women are either mothers or vampires as regards men.

“All the women desire love,” says Odille, “but the mother woman she desires it that she may have the right to bestow it abundantly in return, while the vampire woman she possesses nothing to give, there dwells in her only the passion to devour yet another one !”

Perhaps “mere man” finds it difficult to distinguish between the two species, but as I sometimes cannot refrain from pointing out to Odille, a good many of them seem to prefer the vampires, at all events till the white light of matrimony is turned on the lady.

The object of Odille's care and devotion fell a victim at last to a thorough-paced vampire who did Odille the great service of marrying him out of hand and removing him from the scene, otherwise she might be still leading the *vie manquée* of the unwedded, for she refused many excellent *prétendants* during

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

A Run of Luck of the time of that heart affair. As it is, retribution has fallen on that faithless lover, and a great happiness come to the deserving heroine. Life for once has taken a leaf out of our childhood's story books.

Odille's betrothal, as one might expect, came about in quite an unorthodox, emancipated fashion. She conducted it all herself, though she is fond of saying I helped her. But the fact is, she needed no help from any one; the affair just marched, or rather galloped, from start to goal without a halt, leaving me and the other onlookers breathless.

I ought to explain that Odille, though Parisian to her finger-tips, is only one third French. Equipped with a German mother and an Irish grandmother, she can justly claim to be *cosmopolite*, and she has traded on the fact to emancipate herself from all tiresome restrictions which hamper the unmarried young French woman.

In her father and mother Odille has been most fortunate; neither have ever given her an hour's trouble. (How few daughters can say as much on this side the Channel!)

“A SAPPHO OF THE SALON”

Both seemed to have recognised from the first that their “reason of existence” was to tend and foster this delicate, gifted little being, smoothing the rough places and acting as buffers between her and the east winds of life, yet offering no barrier to her free growth and expansion of mind and body, whether her bent were to study Schopenhäuer or learn fencing. And Odille’s bent has ever been to taste freely of every fruit in the garden of life, to do everything and know everything, though this adventurous spirit abides in a small, delicate frame and the enthusiastic *féministe* is daintily feminine in all things; even Mémé can never deny this. *The Tree of Knowledge*

She gives very little time or money to her dress, but her raiment seems somehow always to be a part of her individuality, showing off the straight, slim lines of her figure, and bringing out the grey-green of her big, dreamy eyes. “I find it is not very intelligent to love much *la toilette*,” she says; but I maintain it needs a lot of intelligence to dress well, whatever she may say.

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A literary coterie My friendship with Odille has given me a glimpse into the literary and artistic salons of Paris. A little knack of being able to make a soft, running accompaniment on the piano to some of the "Lotus Dreams" and other verse, has done me good service. My relations and friends in England will smile, and I smile, too, for it requires no more intelligence than spinning a top, but this little thread of music has earned me the reputation of a rare musical genius. I hope no one will come over and give me away!

At the *réunions* of a distinguished and charming lady who takes a leading part in the *féministe* movement, at the Sundays of Madame Fontaine, the select Fridays of Mademoiselle de Vassova, many is the delightful time I have had with Odille, in spite of dear Mémé's invariable prophecy that I would bore myself and find myself quite out of my own frame. It was at one of these receptions that Odille met her fate not long ago.

We were a very select and distinguished company. Almost every one, except myself,

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was a poet or at least an interpreter of *A distin-*
poetry. We had a tournament of song, *guished*
but were such a mutual admiration so-^{sponsor}
ciety that my British Philistine spirit longed
for some dissentient Tannhäuser with rude
shock to strike a discordant note.

Seated next to me was a grey-haired,
rosetted member of the sacred circle which
kept Dumas and Hugo waiting so long
outside its narrow portals. He took me
under his wing in paternal style and put me
au courant, introducing me to any one near,
though he and I had not ourselves been
through that preliminary.

“A distinguished young English lady,
the friend of our charming *Princesse Odille* !
She possesses a talent rare and exquisite for
the music.”

This was the form of introduction on the
part of my friend of the rosette. Useless to
protest that I was not distinguished, that I
did not possess a rare and exquisite talent.
I found it much simpler at last to accept the
position.

I inquired who was a stately, keen-faced
old lady our hostess was greeting with a

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Dateless deep *révèrence* and installing in a seat of
divinities honour.

"Ah, you must observe her well, that one," my friend told me. "That is the Duchesse de Rocheville, a *bel-esprit* of the type one finds but rarely now. She possesses race and genius of a quality most high. In general one should not permit the thought of age in connection with your so charming sex, mademoiselle, for the woman is like the music, she has no date, but our *vis-à-vis* it is an exception, she carries her eighty years like a crown: is it not so?"

It was true. Age seemed to have brought none of its infirmities, it had but crowned with silver the stately, erect head. And presently when a celebrated actress from the Odéon stood forth and recited a trilogy of sonnets by this remarkable old lady, the keen blue eyes that fixed the speaker shone young and eager as that of a girl in her first youth. Enthusiastic applause, congratulations, compliments succeeded this performance, and more poets followed in quick succession. *Les larmes aux yeux*, was also a frequent tribute. Our French neigh-

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bours are not afraid of either giving or receiving praise. Mémé says we British suppress our emotions and school ourselves till we look as cold and unresponsive as a row of tombstones. “English reserve,” I assure her, not lack of feeling; but it cannot be very encouraging to the performer, when you come to think of it. *The British Spartan*

A Prince with a past which, according to my Academical friend, had furnished him with plenty of material, told us all he felt about love, especially when the passion swept over his soul by moonlight. I turned to my neighbour with, as I thought, a suitably flippant remark about this monsieur’s sentiment being unable to support the trying light of day, but was startled to find his eyes brimming with tears — real tears. I felt more crushed by this than by his reproachful, “Mademoiselle, you are young, you mock yourself of love. Notwithstanding it is beautiful, the love. Ah, but yes!”

Strange, a moment before he had shown scant sympathy with the Prince and no belief in his sincerity. But the artist in him was stirred, and the flowing musical words and emotional

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*Love di-
vine undy-
ing* voice touched a spring not so easily reached in the internal machinery of an Anglo-Saxon. A speedy Nemesis, however, overtook me in the form of an heroic Roumanian ballad, recited by the poet herself standing like some noble high-priestess rekindling the fires of a deserted altar. Tears blinded me, and before I had time to rearrange my countenance my hostess called upon me to "touch at the piano," and accompany Odille in a "Lotus Dream." It was small consolation to hear my rosetted friend's aside to our hostess :

"Ah, one sees well that she has some heart, that young lady. She is altogether charming !"

Seated in profile at the end of the piano, I noticed a small lame man whose eyes seemed to have an electric light at the back of them.

From the moment Odille began (her theme was love divine undying, not the kind usually grown in Paris), he listened absorbed and spellbound. When she ceased he sighed deeply, but appeared too lost in thought to applaud with the rest. Odille and her accompanist were encored enthu-

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siastically, and as she rose once more the man *Cupid*
of the eyes settled himself to listen with *draws*
renewed absorption. *bow*

When it was over, I saw him standing between his crutches and bowing as some one spoke the words of introduction. From that time till we left he remained rooted at Odille's side.

My hostess told me he was a distinguished Italian *savant* who had lately accepted an important chair at the Collège de France. His coming to her reception was an immense compliment, for he went rarely into society, especially since the death of his only sister, for whom he had "shown a devotion touching and remarkable."

The *savant* and Odille seemed to find a good deal to say to each other, and to part with reluctance. It is strange how much of life can be lived sometimes in half an hour.

Odille's eyes were very bright as we drove home. "*Ma chérie,*" she said, "you will come with me to-morrow to the studio of Jean Torinsky? The Signor Montano will be there. He is enamoured of me because

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Discretion of my poesies, as no doubt you observed.
is the You will tell me how you find him."
better part

"More to the purpose if I ask how do you find him and his electric eyes?" I asked lightly.

Odille's answer sobered me, and gave me to think.

"It may be that this is he whom I have long awaited. I do not know — but I find myself strangely impatient for to-morrow. You will occupy yourself with Torinsky to make me pleasure and divert him as you so well can; is it not so, *ma 'mie*?"

Of course I agreed. I would do more than that for Odille, though I fulfilled my promise of diverting Torinsky at great personal sacrifice, for those symbolic pictures of his always make me very nervous. One thing I have learned, and that is never to ask questions. However mystifying or incomprehensible the subject may be, I always pretend I understand all about it. If I have to listen to anything uncomfortable, at least it shall not be the result of any heedless questions on my part.

But though I had one eye for Torinsky's

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pictures, I kept the other on the Italian. I *Sappho* did not want Odille to let herself in for *meets her* another ungrateful son and perhaps an *fate* exigent invalid to boot! The impression he made, viewed thus sideways, was distinctly favourable, however. There was a certain simplicity and directness about him as attractive as it is rare.

Still I was hardly prepared for Odille's first remark on our leaving the studio.

“I know it now for certain. It is that one there I shall espouse.”

I confess I gasped. It was so sudden, she did not even wait to know what I thought of him; and Odille has generally a great opinion of my judgment about men.

“You have really decided to espouse him? But he will never dare to ask you,” I told her.

Odille turned on me her wonderful smile. “How well you divine him, my little friend! No, he shall not need to ask me. You are right; never would he ask any woman to share his bruised life. Already he has told me so. That happiness is not for him, he says; but even in the moment of saying it,

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The problem of life he knows well his eyes they are compelling me to give it to him."

This sounded almost like hypnotism, but I knew Odille did nothing without good reason, and that she must have carefully weighed this matter, in spite of the short time.

I begged her to recount to me her reasons.

"*Ma chérie*, I will tell you. For me life is not the simple problem it is for most women who solve it by an early marriage arranged for them with any man not too unsuitable; is it not so? That did not sing to me that solution there. I desire marriage, but it must be a true marriage, that which finds itself not easily. At the age which I have it is inconvenient that I marry a man really young. There remains to me then to choose a widower or an old boy (*vieux garçon*) or the man exceptional, outside the line of ordinary experience. For the widower I have a sentiment strongly adverse. Memory stands ever erecting a wall between our souls. For the old boy, well me I find he will be egoist, having lived too long alone. Never could he give me a love

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sufficiently noble and devoted. Then here I find as by a miracle the man apart, exceptional. He has neither the disabilities of the widower nor of the old boy, yet is of an age suitable. His mind is a storehouse of treasure. Every thought possesses the quality of beauty, originality, force, and truth. He is of a sympathy, a sensitiveness, an intuition I have found before in no man, that which will render him always a companion, a real comrade. When the youth has passed, *ma petite amie bien aimée*, it is these things here will touch most acutely the married life. Have I reason — yes?”

I looked at Odille with my eyes half shut (my “Mona Lisa” expression she calls it) to signify I was reading her soul. Then I put the searching question, “Odille, art thou in love?”

“I am in train to be so,” she answered with conviction. “For him, he offers me the great love of which only the great soul is capable. To be loved thus is a fate granted to few, yet to a woman of my temperament it is the one thing essential to happiness. He is enamoured of my mind,

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Platonic affinity of my soul. To be enamoured in that fashion there is to experience a love that fatigues itself not, but, on the contrary, augments always; the physical love burns itself out, it is of its essence to terminate itself in ashes."

Odille has a convincing way of stating her case, but I could not help remembering how she had assured me on a previous occasion that the glorious physical beauty of a former friend had been to her the pledge and guarantee of his inward perfection. "It is the body which expresses the soul," Odille had said; but since she seemed so utterly oblivious of his physical infirmities, I felt I could only suggest that to know this gentleman's soul she ought to give herself more time.

"Time, *ma chérie!* What is it then time? For those who have mounted to the highest planes of thought it exists not, the time! This one here is a soul that has known love devoted and unselfish, has known also sorrow and loss and renunciation. I also have known them all these. In me he finds what satisfies him, what he has long sought for and dreamt of. I

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say it not by vanity ; it is a mystery pro- *The magic*
found why one woman becomes to a man *crystal*
the only one in the world, but thus it is.
For me when I am with this man I see
nothing but his eyes. They say he is lame
and a cripple ; I know it not, his eyes are all
that I see, veritable windows of the soul.
He reads my unspoken thought ; it is a
perfect repose I experience in his presence.
Now, my Betty, what hast thou to say ? Is
this not the highest happiness that knocks
me at the door ? ”

What could I say but “open the door
and let him enter” ?

Odille and I are made so differently !
Never under any circumstances could I
stand still, take up my life in my two
hands, as it were, examining and analysing
it with a view to the future. I live from
hand to mouth, act on impulse, regret it ;
think after acting, instead of before. If I
do chance to do the thinking first, I see
so many aspects of the question that my
state of indecision paralyses action.

My peculiar relation with regard to that
seafaring person to whom I have occasion-

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An insidious intrusion ally alluded never made any demands upon me in this respect. I cannot remember the time when I seemed to have any option in the matter. He just grew into my life without my specially noticing that he was anything more than a cousin; and when I did, well, notice it, I found he had become the most absolute and fundamental fact there. So what could I do? He just took possession of the citadel, and kept it. Fortunately for my friends, however, I can generally give most prompt and unwavering advice to them. I did so on this occasion, and Odille declares it sustained her wonderfully.

The engagement was announced about a fortnight later.

It was on the occasion of a little dinner given by the parents of Odille, — one of those pleasant little parties of ten to twelve people, without ceremony or stiffness, which one so often enjoys in Paris, with nothing of the duty entertainment about it. The table was round and conversation general; it rarely splits up into the *tête-à-tête* form, which, by the way, has its good points,

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though it cannot be said to conduce so much *Lieder* to an air of gaiety as where every one joins *ohne* in at the pitch of their voices, sharing the *Worte* same joke or *bon mot*, and sharpening their wits on one another with the light-hearted *badinage* of our lively neighbours.

Odille and her *savant*, seated side by side, were as natural and unconscious as a pair of happy children. I noticed his eyes turned on her and positively shone whenever she opened her lips.

Dinner over, we all moved into the adjoining rooms *en suite*, men and women taking their coffee and cigarettes in sociable foreign fashion together. After a time some one suggested soft strains of Wagner from the music-room beyond. They have a Blühtner which no one with ten fingers can resist. I love playing in a room alone and almost in the dark. I began the overture to “Tristan,” and presently Odille’s charming little German mother glided in softly and sat down by my side. “*Continuez, continuez, mon enfant. Es thut weh, doch es heilt,*” she murmured.

I don’t know how long I wandered on. One loses count of time on setting foot in

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"The Love-Potion" that Land, but suddenly I was aware of a shadow in the doorway through which the light streamed from the other rooms. Two shadows, hand in hand, they stood there, then advanced slowly, very slowly, towards the lady beside me. It was an embarrassing moment. I felt distinctly one too many. Yet I knew at moments like this if only the accompaniment is in subdued harmony with the performers, no one is conscious of the accompanist, so I continued playing very softly, and half unconsciously slipped into the chords of the "Love-Potion." When I turned, the two shadowy figures were mingled into one as they knelt before the mother of Odille.

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Of course there was a large section of friends who declared it was "a marriage impossible," "absurd," "Odille was mad"; or she was hypnotised, to throw herself away on a cripple, the wreck of a man, even if he were ten times a genius.

Others said she was fortunate in marrying a "so distinguished celebrity." What did it signify, after all, whether or no the author of

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a work crowned by every academy of science *A well-*
had the legs of an equal length and the back *matched*
like a *gendarme* ! *pair*

While the bride's mother laughed through her tears, "Not a word about the *dot* or anything practical ! What for a betrothal unbusinesslike and original ! One sees well that he no Frenchman is ! Truly but I think his character and that of our dear child will famously together with-go !"

.
Well, I don't think there is much more to say.

The marriage seems to be an ideal one ; perhaps I had better add *unberufen*, for "one never knows what may arrive," as Mémé cheerfully observes whenever Odille is mentioned ; "above all with those poets and dreamers who have the temperament so eccentric."

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*The concierge
versus the
commis-
sionaire*

EVERY rose has its thorn, and the thorn in the rose-life of that brilliant, beautiful city where in so many respects living has been brought to a fine art, is the *concierge*. Only one thing is worse than the *concierge*, and that is, his wife.

People accustomed to that monument of respectability and respect to be encountered at the entrance of London flats and mansions, with, more often than not, an imposing row of military medals across his breast, find it difficult to adjust their ideas to the Paris *concierge*, an individual whose exterior, usually slovenly and ramshackly, makes his omnipotence the more surprising. The difference of the poles lies between these two officials nominally occupying the same position. The English ex-warrior is your servant. He calls your cabs, carries your luggage up and down, works the lift for you and your visitors whenever desired, and performs these and other duties as if they were also a pleasure.

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But the French *concierge* does none of these *Untrammelled tyranny* things. They are neither his duty nor his pleasure. He is your master, and no easy-going one either. His office is to keep a vigilant eye upon you, open the outer door, of which you are not allowed a key and at 11 P. M. is locked, and to receive your letters, delivering them three times a day at your door unless you have done anything to merit his keeping them back. In every case he takes careful note of your correspondence, and not a post card but he and his wife could repeat by heart. Another duty there is which adds strength and dignity to his already impregnable position, he collects your rent; and if monsieur *le propriétaire* receives his rents with regularity, what more can he desire of his faithful steward? To study the wishes of the tenant is a counsel of perfection of which no proprietor would ever dream.

It is, therefore, easier in most cases to remove the foundation stone of the massive building itself than to uproot a *concierge* once established in his *loge*. And the foothold of the Lafosse couple in the Avenue Friedland is more than usually secure, from

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Scylla and the fact that Madame Lafosse was formerly *Charybdis* in the service of the landlord, and the appointment was a marriage gift. Should any suffering tenant, after some last straw to his or her already overcharged load, rashly appeal to the proprietor, a letter in reply, contents of which have been either written or dictated by the watchdogs in the *loge*, informs him that monsieur, the landlord, finds no occasion for complaint against his trusted *employés*, but if the *locataire* is not contented he is welcome to remove himself at the end of the next quarter. The tenant realises at last the hopelessness of his position. He knows that, were he to leave, he would probably only exchange *Scylla* for *Charybdis*, with the horrors of a *déménagement* thrown in. He falls back upon the one available remaining method for mitigating his lot, that of propitiating Monsieur and Madame Lafosse by bribery and flattery of the most blatant description.

But even this has its difficulties, for *l'appetit vient en mangeant* and *douceurs* lose their efficacy unless continually repeated and augmented. Whereas fifty francs as a sweet-

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ener for the New Year satisfied madame *A sop for*
the first time, it is greeted with an ominous *Cerberus*
sniff the next, and were it not quickly supplemented, who knows what might be the dire consequences? For if you manage to incur the displeasure of either this worthy or her husband, they have a thousand little delicate modes of making you aware of the fact, unless, indeed, your offence calls for the severest form of retribution, when the blows are administered surreptitiously. Then an unaccountable mischance seems to dog your footsteps day and night, and it may be months or even years before a lurid light reveals to you that the worm at the root of your prosperity is the *concierge*.

There was Madame Thiébault on the second floor, a new arrival, who, to her dismay, found one by one her friends changing towards her. They passed her with cold bows, and were not at home when she called. It was by an accident she learned at last that *Madame la Concierge* was in the habit of waylaying her visitors and turning them back with offensive and chilling messages. The cards they left went to the rubbish

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The price of peace heap, and some flowers to another lady (by mistake!). On another occasion tickets for a concert at the Trocadéro were thrown away by the *bonne* as *débris*. But Perrette assures me Mademoiselle Lafosse and her friend wore their best hats on the afternoon of that entertainment! Perrette, from her vantage ground of the kitchen window *au premier* looking out on the courtyard, overheard the following interesting dialogue:

“Thou didst well,” commented the *concierge* next door. “My poor cat, thou hast no luck that she found all out so soon. But say then, for what wert thou giving her a punishment?”

“Figure to thyself,” explained Madame Lafosse, “the miserable one gave but a single bottle of wine to her predecessor’s three! Also a visitor who stayed with her one week gave but a paltry five francs on leaving; and this at her instigation, as I know from Madeleine, the *bonne*, who overhears all, and says it was first a question of seven francs — little enough that, God knows! I ask you if a character of such a parsimony does not

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merit the good chastisement? *Dame!* but *A private*
I have not finished with her yet!" *intelli-*

I fear there is no denying it, Madame *gence de-*
Perrette is a gossip. But she is so dramatic *partment*
and her news generally of such thrilling
interest, neither Uncle Jack nor I can help
listening to her. For one thing, we could
not stop her if we tried. You might as well
try to stop Niagara. She has relations
placed in good centres all over Paris, and
a great aptitude for utilizing these advan-
tages. She knew that the great banker,
Monsieur Olivier, was "a pierced basket"
six months before his failure; and she could
tell you exactly why Madame la Présidente
gave such a glacial salutation at the reception
of the Champs Elysées to the lady who en-
joyed her warmest smile on a former occa-
sion, — a question the society papers asked
in vain.

But to return to Madame Lafosse.
Another of her victims, our old friend,
Madame Vollot, on the fourth floor, told
me that watering her plants at the window
the other day she unluckily allowed some
drops to fall. As fate would have it, they

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*Little
drops of
water*

alighted on the thinly thatched head of Madame Lafosse, as she sat outside discussing with her sympathetic neighbours the trials of a *concierge* life. The Lafosse started to her feet like a soldier called to arms, the light of battle in her eye. Shooting a fiery glance upwards, she let fly an opprobrious epithet, suitable to the occasion, but impossible to repeat.

"*Je vous demande mille pardons,*" replied the terrified lady from above in a voice which she says shook with fear, and I can well believe it.

"*Je m'en fiche de vos pardons!* and the devil take both you and your accursed flowers," responded madame heartily.

At this point she was joined by her husband, and an interested crowd soon collected to hear the enormities of a *maudite locataire*, who would be "far too well housed in the dust bin." The day following poor Madame Vollot received a notice that she was to remove all her plants immediately or leave at the end of a quarter.

Her flowers are the pride and joy of her solitary life, but the poor lady cannot

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face two moves in one year. She has only *The in-*
lately taken possession of her modest little *formation*
flat on the fourth floor. *bureau*

The *loge* of the *concierge* is the happy hunting ground of the *bonnes*, *valets de chambre*, and tradespeople of all the tenants. There, at every odd moment during the day and for long pleasant hours in the evening, you, the *locataire*, can rest assured that your affairs are being investigated, your character dissected, and a new version rendered of all your most trivial words and actions. In this hotbed of mischief, scandal grows apace and soon springs up among the tenants, for each servant endeavours to carry back some choice morsel to her mistress.

Even if the latter be a model of discretion, there is a way of springing information which may surprise the most wary into response. For example: "It disquiets me to see madame showing so much kindness to that Madame de Beauvoir. If she but knew the histories she recounts of madame! Every one was laughing till they were foolish last night down there by the *con-*

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Second fiddle *cierge*. I would not dare repeat to madame the follies I heard!"

With the best will in the world to dismiss the thought, such observations create a disquieting sensation in the average feminine mind.

I will say for Perrette her gossiping does not take this form. In the first place, she never frequents the *loge* of the *concierge*. "*Dieu merci*, I mix myself not in that dust heap there!" says Madame Perrette. Though, by some master trick of diplomacy, she manages to keep on perfectly friendly terms with the explosive couple, and lucky indeed for us that she does so. Her age and position, as confidential servant of so many years' standing, make this possible. Perrette acquires information by a subtle method of her own and without ever condescending to ask questions. It is always Madame Perrette who knows, never mind what; and Celestine, the *bonne*, so judiciously kept in the background of my uncle's establishment, never dares to offer anything she hears *là bas* as though it were news to Madame Perrette.

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"Do you think it is true, then, Ma'm' *Back-* Perrette, that what they are saying about ^{*stairs gos-*} the young Comtesse *au second*?" ^{*sip*}

"No, it is not true what they say," Perrette will answer authoritatively, with not the dimmest notion to what Celestine refers. "They are but imbeciles who recount to thee that history there —"

"But, Ma'm' Perrette, see you, Mathilde herself, the *femme de chambre* of Madame la Comtesse, she it was who herself pieced together the *petit-bleus* — three in one day figure to yourself! All of the same signature! Madame had torn them into crumbs — impossible to read more than half the words — but with that one learned enough. How then to doubt?"

"*Chut!* To lend the ear to a *friponne* like that Mathilde, always on the pavement, the tongue going like a clapper in the wind! The true history it is not she who knows, nor Lafosse, nor any of you; what you chatter it is but the fringe." Thus the wily Perrette.

Next day, Celestine, piqued by Madame Perrette's lofty dismissal of the subject,

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“ *Losing the North* ” brings fuller information, no longer restricted to the fringe.

“ *Dame !* but what you said that was very true, Ma’m’ Perrette ; we knew not all we others. It appears that Monsieur le Comte he has already eaten up the entire *dot* of his bride, and not yet married the year ! Not difficult to guess by whom he has been assisted, one says ! But, Ma’m’ Perrette, she of course knows better than I, is it not so ? ” (in a tone of mock humility). “ Not astonishing, then, if Madame la Comtesse consoles herself ! ”

“ You are the imbeciles and the ignorants, you others down there,” says Perrette. “ Madame la Comtesse consoles herself with monsieur her brother. Yes, he gave his name as he passed the *loge* last night and I heard it, me ; it is the same with which madame is born. If Lafosse was not of a stupidity to cut with a knife she would not have ‘lost the north’ in this fashion. One can join the crumbs of the *petit-bleus* together, but joins not the two and two when one is occupied to make the scandal ! *Mon Dieu*, but it disgusts me ! To be

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bad tongues it is without doubt bad, but to *Firm al-* be of such a stupidity! Go: that makes *lies* itself not pardoned!"

Nearly all the servants — Madame Perrette is of course an exception — sleep in quarters at the top of the building. This arrangement so entirely suits the plans of both *concierge* and *bonne*, that many of the latter refuse any situation where they will be required to sleep in the *appartement*. Madame Vollot, however, does not fall in with this plan, and prefers that her only servant should sleep under her roof, where there is no lack of room. She pays the penalty for this inconsiderate conduct by changing her *bonne* at what bids fair to be a rate of twelve times a year.

"My poor girl, what an existence is thine!" remarks Madame Lafosse to each newcomer. "All the other brave girls possess their own door key and sleep upstairs. Their lives, by consequence, are free, seest thou, while thine is but that of a slave, a prisoner. Here at my *loge* every evening all the young people assemble themselves. We laugh, we amuse ourselves, and many a

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*The domestic
agency*

good marriage is arranged, I can assure thee! Each one brings her little contribution and we feast well. Each one recounts her story. *Enfin*, we others we live, whilst thou in thy miserable little hole next the kitchen, thou art in a more ugly position than poor Jackot, the parrot there, with a chain round the leg."

A chorus of agreement from the emancipated "brave girls" possessing the above-mentioned blessings soon decides the new little *bonne* from the country to accept the offer of kind Madame Lafosse to find her a place with a mistress more reasonable. Why, there is the lady of our good François here, *au premier*, who requires at this moment a nice little *femme de chambre*. Payment for this service must be rendered, of course, both to François and Lafosse! There will be a big hole in the first year's wages, but instead of going dully up to bed, behold her now joining the hilarious party downstairs, not empty handed, *bien entendu*, or the welcome would be but cold.

Sometimes pleasant little parties are made up to the Folies Bergères, Moulin Rouge,

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or a *soirée dansante*. If anything in the *Borrowed* wardrobe of Louise's mistress, a beautiful *plumes* Marquise, famed for her attractive *toilettes*, should take the special fancy of Louise or her friend, Madame Lafosse, what more natural than that it should be borrowed for the evening!

It was by a singularly contrary mischance that the Marquis arose one morning at four o'clock, and thinking she heard some one moving, went into the kitchen and found herself face to face with a vision of loveliness arrayed in one of her smartest *confections*.

She rubbed her dazed eyes, thinking herself the victim of some hallucination, till the voice of her maid raised, in expostulation at her untimely visit, left no room for doubt as to the too solid form encased in the delicate *mousseline de soie*. What Madame la Marquise said on that occasion was, Louise assured the circle at the *loge*, in the very worst possible taste.

It was an unlucky little *contretemps*. She had gone in to make herself a cup of tea before going upstairs; it was an imprudence

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

A loan by — a folly, if you will — she had made her
French apologies, therefore. But the manner in
leave which madame had received them showed her to be of a character malevolent and ungenerous, unworthy the trust and affection of Louise. She was glad to leave such a person, and things being as they found themselves now, she advised Madame Lafosse not to return the lace handkerchief and ornament for the hair which she had borrowed; madame had many of the same, and as she had now locked all her *armoires*, it might cause fresh unpleasantness.

Madame Lafosse was full of sympathy.

“*Parbleu*, and I, who thought thou hadst fallen so well and likely to gain much in that situation! What an uncertainty is this life! Well, my poor girl, thou hast the real good sense as regards those little trifles I borrowed. In this world one is lost without a little prudence, is it not so? Even Monsieur le Curé allows for that and provides a penance not too severe for the cases of necessity. In return for thy *gentillesse* I will do all my possible for thee, and doubt not to find thee before long a good place

THE CONCIERGE

or a good husband. The little percentage, *A bas les* a mere nothing as we are such dear friends, *riches!* is the same for either service rendered."

Louise produced a bottle of wine, skillfully concealed about her person. Celestine assured Perrette she refused to partake of it, being of a conscience too sensitive. "Drink, my friends," cried Louise.

"*A bas les riches! Conspuez les aristocrates,*" responded Monsieur Lafosse with enthusiasm. "Truly one who rises at four in the morning to spy on other people deserves all the misfortune *le bon Dieu* can send her."

The Lafosse couple were proud to feel themselves in a position to carry out part at least of *le bon Dieu's* purpose.

Of all those occupying *appartements* in Paris, I know only one *locataire* who can boast a life of perfect freedom and unconstraint. She, as one might perhaps expect, waves the banner of the stars and stripes, and the reason she has attained to this unique condition is that, after years of much-resented suffering at the hands of the tyrant tribe,

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American including a term under the Lafosse couple,
diplomacy she has succeeded in discovering a charming flat which, strangely enough, is devoid of a *concierge*, has not even a perch for the sole of the foot of one. This blessed abode of peace, the wing of a larger block, is possessed of its own front door, small courtyard, and, supremest blessing of all, private letter box.

"I believe I can claim to be the only purfeckly free and happy woman owning an apartemon in Parus," says Mrs. Hamilton P. Otis, with pardonable pride. "I jest worried around till I struck this spot. Soon as I caught sight of that *bruyt à letterer apār* I concluded to fix myself here right away. But you bet I had to settle up that old *conciurge* round the corner before I'd been here twenty-four hours. She wors mad to think I was going to take in my own mail! Came round here looking as though she owned the Twilleries and the Louver both. 'Guess madame ud best let the *facteur* bring her letters round to the big door,' she says; 'last tenant did so, and he objects does the *facteur* vurry particularly

THE CONCIERGE

to going away round to your little door on this side. It is much more convenient for madame,' she says, 'to have me take charge of her mail, as I do the rest.'

*Stars and
Stripes
trium-
phant*

"'Thank you, Madame Conciurge,' I said, 'but I took this apartemon jest because of that *bwoyt à letterer apār* and because it worries me to think of giving trouble to any more conciurges. I've given 'em a good bit since I came to this city, I reckon! Much obliged, but guess I sha'n't require your services for anything whatever — see? I wish you a *bong jour*.'

"You should have heard that door downstairs bang as she went out. Guess she's Madame Lafosse's own twin!"

Monsieur and Madame Lafosse still flourish like the wicked bay tree. The tenants still groan under their yoke, and there is nothing to be done except grin and bear it, since the genus Lafosse is not exceptional, but common as the blackberry in a September hedge. Should it ever be the fate of these pages to fall into those ever-ready hands, and be translated by one of the

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

A common type experts of the *Age Merveil*, the only question in the minds of either Monsieur or Madame Larosse will be which of their amiable *amis* has set for this portrait, inadequate indeed, but, as far as it goes, faithful.

FEU MONSIEUR VOLLOT

*A meteoric
politician*

I HAVE referred to Madame Vollot as one of the victims of our tyrant *concierge*. When I first knew her, before she came here to groan under their yoke, she was installed in a much larger *appartement* in the Avenue Champs Elysées with some of the signs still about her of her former prosperity ; though owing to unlucky speculations made with the idea of increasing her income, it was even then on a steady and perceptible decrease.

It is about seven years ago that Monsieur Vollot died. I never knew him, but Uncle Jack, who did, says he was a curious, interesting man of that flash-in-the-pan type not infrequently met with in the French political world ; witty, dramatic, excitable, and, needless to say, with a great gift of the gab. Like a meteor he had flashed across the political sky ; there had even been a moment in which he had run close for the

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*A pious
widow-
hood*

Presidency, but his career had been cut short suddenly by the fatal *grippe*.

Since his death Madame Vollot has had but one purpose in life,—to keep the memory of this once prominent, now, alas, almost forgotten, Cabinet Minister fresh and green in the minds of his countrymen as are the flowers she tends so carefully on his tomb at Montmartre. The Parisian memory is short, it has enough to do keeping pace with the present; but Madame Vollot (who has no children to divide her interest and affection) determined that consigned to oblivion her Alphonse should never be while stone and marble could testify to his greatness.

A large hole was made in her capital at once by erecting a tomb of immense proportions at Montmartre: it was solid, imposing, awe-inspiring, even amid those surroundings. "Impossible to pass it by unnoticed," as Madame Vollot is wont to observe with pardonable pride.

Every Sunday, after the *grande messe*, Madame Vollot may be seen trudging down the long acacia avenue laden with her fresh

FEU MONSIEUR VOLLOT

wreath of flowers or new plants. A homely *An able* figure in black, — her fifty years undisguised *lieutenant* by art or *toilette*. Indeed her faithful *bonne*, Virginie, gathered to her fathers, alas, about a year ago, always maintained she had bought no new gown since monsieur died. The loss of Virginie is second only to that of her Alphonse to the poor lady, so little suited to cope with the *fin de siècle bonne* of Paris. During the few weeks of Madame Vollot's annual visit to the *bains de mer* it was to Virginie the sacred charge at Montmartre had ever been intrusted, *le tombeau de monsieur* being to both the great interest and care of their lives.

But Madame Vollot could not rest content with a tomb alone, however magnificent. A statue placed in some conspicuous position was her ambition, but, finding that a statue worthy of the original was more than her slender means could afford, she determined at least to have a bust. It was only after five years of patient economy and saving, aided by the resourceful Virginie, that at last a sufficient sum was collected. The sculptor chosen was a prominent artist. No

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

The irony of fate untried genius for Madame Vollot ! By a fortunate chance the bust was finished just as an opportunity arose of presenting it with fitting *éclat* to the French nation. The historic hotel of an aristocratic family, now extinct, was about to be opened as a public museum and library. With that irony so often displayed by the wheel of time, the chief interest of the museum was its republican character, objects connected with the Revolution being among its most valued possessions,—portraits of bloodthirsty heroes, histories and original manuscripts of that time, a mask of Marat, a coat of Desmoulins, Charlotte Corday's dagger, the pen of Robespierre, etc. Such a collection must needs hearten up the most lukewarm citizen.

Madame Vollot's gift was accepted in a letter of polite effusion from Monsieur le Directeur of the museum.

Madame Vollot gave a reception to view the bust. It was pronounced superb ! eloquent ! of an originality striking ! Even Uncle Jack said *pas mal*, — high praise from him of any modern work.

FEU MONSIEUR VOLLOT

Not even to her wedding day had Ma- *The day*
dame Vollot looked forward with such eager- *of her life*
ness and excitement as to that opening
ceremony. The President of the French
Republic himself was to be present, and with
his suite make a tour of inspection through
the galleries. Her prophetic eye beheld
that illustrious company pausing reverently
when they came to the spot where stood the
bust of her Alphonse. With prophetic ear
she heard the President break forth into an
enthusiastic panegyric on the mighty dead
of France, Alphonse Vollot first and fore-
most. She rehearsed the imaginary dis-
course to herself and her friends.

Behind her back the friends shrugged
their shoulders. "Poor lady! She imagines
the entire world revolving around that
famous bust. *Mon Dieu!* is she tiresome!"

Only the heart of the old *bonne*, Virginie,
beat to the same tune as her own. No pic-
ture of the blessed Madonna could have
been gazed at with greater reverence and
dusted with greater care than that card of
invitation from the municipality of Paris
— *rigoureusement personnelle*. It admitted

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Better
clay than
oblivion*

Madame Vollot and one friend. She made me promise to be that friend. "Me, I like to have the youth about me, and I have, alas, no daughter!" she said pathetically.

It was a dazzling June day when we drove up the narrow quaint old street, gaily decorated with flags and lined on either side with loyal republicans assembled to cheer their President.

"Had he lived," sighed Madame Vollot, "their cheers would have been for my Alphonse! However, better to be a bust than nothing on such a day!"

Politicians, Academicians, a sprinkling of *noblesse*, even a sample or two of Bourbon and Buonaparte royalty soon began to stream into the grey old courtyard, taking their places round the stone fountain in the centre, silent now for many a year. The ladies of the Republic flitted to and fro like gay butterflies, but the modern *hommes d'affaires* in their solemn black cloth habiliments are a dismal substitute for the gaily clad gallants, whose light laugh made the courtyard ring in the days of Louis Quatorze, of magnifi-

FEU MONSIEUR VOLLOT

cent memory — the good old days when the fountain played. *Gustave in his "blacks"*

Madame Vollot found herself near friends, an "ancient military" of the Garde Impériale and his lady. They aided me in supporting her with sympathy and smelling salts.

Gustave d'Aville also appeared on the scene, his bureau, to me always a vague and mysterious designation, privileging him to a card of admission. Garbed in his sombre black, Gustave looked as serious, I was going to say, as a Scotch mute; but the latter, when the combined joys of whiskey and a burying are looming ahead, has a subdued air of festivity pervading his "blacks" which no one could have imputed to Gustave. It is odd how seriously the light-hearted Frenchman takes himself when he is participating in anything of the nature of a patriotic or political function. He sheds his sense of humour on the threshold; and the man who parts with his sense of humour, never mind where or when, is apt to "lose the north," as Mémé expresses it.

Gustave's gloom lightened a little as he

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Surreptitious relaxations took a vacant seat near us, and he was soon murmuring compliments in my ear in as mundane a voice as though he had been wearing one of his faultless boulevard suits from the great Wasse.

“Your *toilette* is ravishing, know you, *ma cousine*. In that little costume grey, *demi-religieuse*, *demi-coquette*, never have I felt you so troubling!”

“You also trouble me,” I answered, “to hear the words so frivolous from one with the air serious of a priest of the Scotch church, it appears to me a scandal.”

Gustave’s reply was drowned by the clatter of Monsieur le Président’s horses. “He arrives!” “He is here!” Every one rose, and the band of the National Guard, who had been waiting with their instruments ready cocked, fired off the “*Marseillaise*” as Monsieur le Président, tall, dignified and benign, passed bowing through the crowd and took the gilt armchair between the seats of messieurs the prefect of the Seine and the president of the municipal councillors (the latter equivalent to our Lord Mayor of London).

FEU MONSIEUR VOLLOT

Then followed the opening discourses. *La patrie*
Let no man say the art of rhetoric is dead! *et la*
In France, at any rate, it still flowers abundantly, a responsive audience ever at hand *gloire*
to encourage its growth by applause and tears of ready emotion. The speakers covered a good deal of ground, concluding at last with a flourish of trumpets for *La Patrie, La Gloire, La France*. Poor dear Madame Vollot wept copiously and squeezed my hand. Gustave said he wished he was Madame Vollot! He occasionally makes the most drivelling remarks.

The band struck up more heroic music, and then followed the presentation to six gentlemen of merit of the decoration of the *Légion d'Honneur*. One by one they mounted the platform, and the President, with a few gracious words, pinned a diminutive red rosette to the coat of the proud one.

"For me," sighed Madame Vollot's military friend, "I prefer the days of bygone glory; this appears to me but a paltry *bourgeois* affair!"

"Achille, *mon ami, tais toi*, make not the

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Tickling
compari-
sons*

imbecile," said his wife. "Till that same little red nothing flowers in your buttonhole I shall not be content. It is an iniquity that it is still absent."

"*Tiens*," cried Madame Vollot, "who is that favoured one?" Monsieur le Président had suddenly precipitated himself on the neck of a stout, red-faced gentleman and kissed him with effusion on both cheeks.

Gustave inquired, with surprise, why I laughed. I explained that I was trying to imagine Lord Salisbury kissing the Lord Mayor of London at a big public meeting.

"Ah! one embraces never in England?" he asked. "What country cold and sad!"

"Ah see! That one there is mister the sub-director of the Department of Public Antiquities," said Monsieur le Commandant. "He has taken an active part in the arrangement of this collection for the public, of course he wins a decoration."

"Oh, *mon Dieu*! I wonder in what position he has placed the bust!" cried Madame Vollot, "and whether he has hung on it the garland of laurel I sent yesterday."

"That the bust of our Vollot is a promi-

FEU MONSIEUR VOLLOT

nent and honoured object rest assured, dear *The ex-*
friend," replied the gallant Achille, sooth- *horta-*
ingly. "Monsieur le Directeur will have *tions of*
seen to that." "*Achille*"

And now came the tour of inspection. Madame Vollot accepted her military friend's arm, and I followed with Gustave. We entered the hotel, the President and suite leading the way. The crowd was dense, the atmosphere stifling, not a window having been opened I suspect since the days of Louis Quatorze. Poor Madame Vollot, in spite of strenuous efforts to keep up with the advance guard, was soon left hopelessly behind, "Achille" being, like herself, of portly dimensions. I insisted on keeping near to support her, if necessary. She could have cried with impatience and vexation, poor dear, as she looked helplessly at the impenetrable human wall gathering in front of her and listened to the exasperating philosophy of her companion.

"Courage, dear lady, courage. All comes to him who knows to wait! With patience and prudence we shall arrive, we shall

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Hope deferred behold with joy and gratification the bust of your distinguished spouse. We are advancing, *voilà !*” They moved two inches forward and stuck again.

The galleries were interminable. Madame Vollot imagined the address in her absence, and groaned aloud. On entering each fresh room she asked anxiously : “ The President, is he here ? Is he here, the bust ? ”

And her companion, balancing his portly person on tiptoe, invariably gave the melancholy reply : “ *Hélas !* in this gallery I perceive him not. Without doubt he will be in the next one.”

We came to the long room in which was erected the buffet. Here the crowd was even more closely packed, champagne and refreshment being in great request. The eyes of the gallant commandant gleamed with hope, but Madame Vollot sighed as she realised it was the sight of champagne, not the bust of Vollot, which kindled that light. After some, to me and Gustave at least, most welcome refreshment, we resumed our pilgrimage, passing with painful toil through more galleries, more corridors.

FEU MONSIEUR VOLLOT

Suddenly the commandant cried excitedly : *Futile*

“Hold ! He is there ! But yes assuredly he is there, our Vollot at last.” *search*

“Where then ? Oh ! *mon Dieu*, where then ?”

In vain Madame Vollot tried to see above the pyramid of roses on her neighbour’s hat.

“Near the window. I beheld for an instant the top of a marble head of distinction, I promise you without doubt it is he ! A crowd surrounds him !”

But arrived on the spot, lo ! the head of distinction proved to be a plaster mask of Marat, taken after death.

Sick with disappointment, faint with fatigue, Madame Vollot found herself at last by the staircase and recognised, to her dismay, the place from which she had started.

I had been so fully occupied giving Gustave good advice, of which he stood badly in need that day, the heat I suppose having rather affected his wits, that we had neither of us noticed such details as time or place.

“But it is impossible ! incredible ! unheard of ! The heat so terrific, the crowd so be-

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Gustave's wildering, have caused me to promenade myself like an imbecile, blind with both eyes, through those unhappy galleries." Poor Madame Vollot wrung her hands in despair. "I must return and look once again."

"Calm yourself, my dear madame. Behold me, I am at your service. Command and you are obeyed, but do not agitate yourself, do nothing imprudent."

"Achille" trembled at the bare idea of another tour through the museum. I generously offered the services of Gustave. He hastened to say he would be ravished to serve madame, but feared he was so ignorant of art that, unless mademoiselle would accompany him, he would not recognise the bust. Gustave acts in a very mean-spirited way sometimes.

"Ah! me, I have an idea," cried the commandant with happy inspiration, "that we seek Monsieur le Directeur he finds himself in his private bureau. Come, then dear lady, gather we together our forces and mount we once more."

"Enter, dear madame! Enter! How

FEU MONSIEUR VOLLOT

you render me honour and pleasure! I *A Job's* am desolated that Monsieur le President *comforter* left us but two moments since." The director came forward from a select group of guests, both his little fat hands extended in welcome.

"*Hélas ! mon cher monsieur,*" cried Madame Vollot, "you find me experiencing a terrible emotion. I am at the point of despair. *De grâce !* inform me where then is the bust of my husband. I find him not, though everywhere have I sought!"

"We have searched for him, monsieur, in every corner of this vast edifice," added "Achille" with a profound sigh.

The director struck his forehead with a look of dismay.

"The bust of Monsieur Vollot, Alphonse Vollot, *mais mon Dieu, oui !* I recollect him perfectly ; the bust is a noble, a magnificent bust ! And he does not find himself in the museum ? But impossible ! Who can doubt it that he is there, certainly, most surely. Calm yourself, dear lady. Calm yourself !" cried Monsieur le Directeur in an agitation so great it communicated itself to every one

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A recital of woes in the room. "Where is monsieur the sub-director of public antiquities? He it is who placed the objects of art!"

"I perceived him at the buffet about an hour ago," said Gustave; "without doubt he is there still." He spoke without a touch of irony.

"I fly to seek him, I save myself!" cried the director; "seat yourself, dear lady, I entreat you. Be seated also, mademoiselle. In a moment I am with you again."

Poor Madame Vollot sank into an arm-chair and wept, while her friend Monsieur le Commandant recounted to a thrilled audience the adventures and emotions through which we had passed, omitting no details.

"Figure to yourselves, messieurs, mesdames, if we have suffered! The cruel suspense of that moment who can tell, in which we beheld the hideous features of Marat, when we trusted to have encountered the noble head of our Vollot!"

After what seemed to Madame Vollot an interminable time the door was thrown open, and Monsieur le Directeur re-entered

FEU MONSIEUR VOLLOT

dragging with him a purple-faced gentleman, *The scape* who flung himself before Madame Vollot, *goat* grovelling with apology.

"I have found him! I have found him!" shrieked the director, rushing up to Madame Vollot and shaking both her hands with violent emotion. The audience were divided as to whether he referred to the bust or the gentleman of antiquities whom he had unearthed from the buffet, in either case they bubbled over with sympathy. But the intuition of Madame Vollot permitted her no more illusions.

"*Mon Dieu*, where in the name of a just heaven, *where* then is the bust?" she reiterated desperately. Her question rang out at last above the general hubbub, and was echoed eagerly, "*Mais, mon Dieu, oui*, where then is he?"

There was a moment's silence; then in trembling accents the purple-faced one spoke: "Pardon, thousands of pardons! I can but precipitate myself upon the mercy of madame! *Hélas!* dear and honoured lady, the bust I know not for the moment precisely where he is. Thing inexplicable,

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

A last resource mysterious, though I search everywhere I find him not."

Madame rose erect.

"How, monsieur! am I then to understand that the bust of Alphonse Vollot, presented by me to this museum, exists no more? Is it for such service to the French Republic that monsieur has been decorated!" Her eyes flashed with so fiery a scorn on the new red rosette, that instinctively its possessor put up a protecting hand.

At this moment the gallant "Achille" interposed.

"Is it not possible that monsieur found himself to such a degree agitated that he failed to discover the bust, which nevertheless is there in safety? Is it not so, that in moments of terrible emotion we fail to perceive what is under the hand? Let us search once again before considering new methods of recovery."

"Monsieur le Commandant speaks here the truth pure and incontestable," agreed the director. "I myself am in this moment so *bouleversé*, I should not recognise my dear wife, were she arranged as a bust. Let us,

therefore, all go now together, dear lady, and *Gustave* with calm and prudence make anew the tour *over-* of the galleries.” *powered*

Stopping to inspect the death warrant of Robespierre, I found myself all at once alone with Gustave in one of the smaller rooms. Without a moment's warning he instantly began :

“ Betty, *ma chérie ma bien-aimée*, you know well why I find myself here to-day ! It is not to see this accursed museum, or to suffocate myself in this crowd of imbeciles — it is because for you I endure willingly the purgatory, the apoplexy, because, *enfin* I adore you ; yes, hopelessly, incurably, I adore you to the folly ! ”

I believe Gustave would consider it positive lack of good manners to be alone with any young woman, married or single, black or white, for two minutes without assuring her of his good-will in this little formula. I assured him I did not doubt any of the interesting facts he stated, and should make some heavy calls on his adoration as time went on. I required a good supply always ready from every man whom I honoured

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*The un-
veiling
of the
bust*

with my distinguished friendship. For the moment, however, my soul thirsted for one thing more even than adoring love, and that was iced lemonade !

What Gustave replied does not translate itself into intelligible English.

As we joined the others at the buffet, poor Madame Vollot collapsed completely. "I can no more ! I am at the end of my forces," she groaned.

"*Du champagne ! d'eau sucrée !* A restorative instantly for madame," shouted the Commandant.

"*La limonade pour mademoiselle,*" called Gustave.

"*Toute suite, monsieur, toute suite,*" said a waiter, discarding one bottle after the other in a vain search.

"But look, see behind you on the pedestal there !" cried Gustave, "*limonade gazeuse*, behold it ?" The waiter seized the siphon, and in so doing the *serviette* with which the pedestal was covered slipped to the ground.

Madame Vollot gave a piercing scream. There stood revealed the bust of Monsieur Vollot !

FEU MONSIEUR VOLLOT

Monsieur le Directeur flung himself on the ample bosom of Madame Vollot and kissed her on both cheeks. The scene which followed so hopelessly beggars description I must leave it untouched. *Rivals for honourable mention*

Gustave, the waiter, and I each consider the entire credit of the discovery due to ourselves. It is quite certain no one but I ever thought of asking for lemonade; so to any impartial mind my inspired idea was the direct cause of finding the bust. On the other hand, Gustave declares only his observant eye would ever have discovered that siphon perched up out of the way behind the buffet; while the waiter, turning to his *confrères* during the hubbub which ensued, observed triumphantly, "Me, I had the idea all the time they searched that it was perhaps one of these little busts here. It was for that that me I lifted the *serviette*. When one loses something, it is always me who finds."

Next day there was a long account of the new museum in the *Petit Republic*, and the most interesting feature of the opening ceremony was stated to be the incident, half

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Public
recognition*

comic, half tragic, in connection with the admirable bust just presented by the widow of our distinguished countryman, Alphonse Vollot; then followed a graphic and picturesque description of the search and finding; all the credit of the discovery, if you please, being attributed to "our distinguished young citizen the municipal counsellor, Monsieur le docteur François Paillot," a gentleman none of us had ever heard of,—doubtless a friend of the editor.

"Behold the irony of life!" as Gustave says.

Our philosophic friend, "Achille," brought a whole budget of newspaper accounts for our perusal that evening.

"Singular circumstance," he observed, "but our poor friend's sufferings have thus been disposed for the better accomplishment of her desire. Had he not been converted into a lemonade stand, one may doubt whether the public would have ever heard of the bust of Vollot."

THE ASILE SAINT JOSEPH

HOW suggestive, secretive, and full of dramatic possibilities are the massive double doors of Paris. *The Harbour of Refuge*

In the narrowest, unlikeliest of streets they will open suddenly, and out drives a smart carriage, while a glimpse into the courtyard beyond shows a vista of flower beds and fountains, and all the cool delights of a summer palace one would have imagined possible only in the spacious boulevards or Champs Elysées.

There is one particularly dingy, noisy street in the heart of Paris which holds just such a surprise behind its great portal *à deux bâtons*. You "pull the bobbin, and the latch goes up." The *concierge* peers out of her *loge* to make sure she is not admitting a wolf into the fold, the doors close behind you, shutting out the din and rush of the world, and you find yourself in the large green garden of the Convent of Saint Joseph. On one side of the quadrangle live the nuns,

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

A gay re- on the other the *pensionnaires* of the *asile*
cluse whose charge they are, — eighteen old gentlemen and twenty-four old ladies, all with noble names and empty coffers.

The smooth velvety lawn, the severe simplicity of the building, the little chapel bell tinkling for vespers, the dark-robed sisters gliding noiselessly to and fro, all suggest a haven of absolute peace and repose, a refuge from the jarring sounds and restless turmoil the other side of the big double doors.

Up the stone steps of the main entrance and down a white corridor on the right I make my way to the room of the Comtesse de Montchesnay.

“*Entrez, entrez donc ! Soyez la bien-venue, ma chère petite amie,*” cries the prettiest little old lady in the world, and clasping my two hands in hers draws me into her pleasant, sunny room with wide windows overlooking the convent garden. Very austere and simple is the room itself, with hardly more furniture or decoration than a nun’s cell, except for the two comfortable armchairs, a present from her friend Madame d’Aville,

THE ASILE SAINT JOSEPH

on the day of her installation. The walls *Saint and* are bare, save for a picture of the Madonna *sinner* and a crucifix hanging above the bed. A single *armoire* contains her entire wardrobe, and the most valued of her possessions are the small row of books on the table by her side. She points to them with a pathetic smile.

“Behold all that remains to me of my past glories, the treasures of my libraries, cabinets, bureaux, et cetera. Just that dozen of little volumes! But they suffice me well,” she adds with her gay little laugh. “They are excellent company — the giants of the world — though some of them the good sisters would willingly throw to the fire, where they believe the authors already to be! For me I say, ‘Leave, then, the poor Rousseau to confess by the side of the Sainte Thérèse. He is surely well placed! *Le bon Dieu* has perhaps arranged for him in the same manner elsewhere!’”

We draw the two armchairs to the window and I ask for all the latest gossip. The Comtesse holds up her dainty little hands with a gesture of pious protest,

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

A very and then proceeds to comply with my
Solomon request.

“Monsieur le Directeur paid his weekly visit to the convent yesterday. It appears he was so tormented by the catalogue of complaints one addressed to him, he had an access of blood to the head and a crisis of the nerves. Fortunately the mother superior, wise woman, who, in spite of her veil, knows men, had the happy idea of giving him a little glass of his favourite *liqueur* which somewhat restored him, the unhappy one ! Nothing, however, was settled about the window, and the battle rages still with a heat, a fury ! Madame Caillot, it appears, suffers from an apoplexy when the window of the dining-hall is closed — Mademoiselle de Briant suffers from a severe pleurisy when it is opened ! What to do ? One refers the affair, like all other affairs, to Monsieur le Directeur ; he suggests each one shall cede and the window be open half of the time. Two funerals would be the result declare with vehemence both ladies. But the affair which most harassed that poor monsieur, it was the competition for the *appartement* which

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recently found itself free by cause of the *The* death of the poor Madame de Soissons at *merits of* the age of ninety-three. This *appartement* is *the case* much envied. There are for it three applicants, each of whose claims, it appears, are indisputable.

“For me,” reflected the Comtesse, “to torment one’s self for such miseries I find stupid, but each one would surrender the life itself sooner than her claim. What will you, *mon Dieu!* There is, for example, Madame le Grand, who has the neighbouring *pièce*, is admirably well installed in my opinion, yet rests not tranquil because she pretends it is the principle of justice one must defend, and she is the next in turn. The Vicomtesse opposite she swears by all the holy saints the room was hers by rights ten years ago, but she relinquished it in favour of the old one who was her cousin. For the third, Mademoiselle de Salles, she shows a letter from the former director promising the room to her on the next vacancy, if till that time she quietly consented to occupy the unhappy little hole where she now finds herself! Behold a pretty little

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*The
comedy of
life*

pot on the fire! Each one shrieks in the same moment in the ears of the unhappy Monsieur le Directeur, and by consequence he enrages himself and nothing accomplishes itself!"

I inquire if *messieurs les pensionnaires* give as much trouble as the naughty old ladies.

"*Mon Dieu*, but they are yet worse, thousands of times worse!" cries the Comtesse eagerly. "With those there it is an *ennui* continual see you; they cannot support that one makes them to keep the rules of the *asile*; not astonishing either, the poor devils! It is not because the wings are feeble the bird enjoys a chain round the leg, *hein, mon enfant*? And these here who in their day have had the world under the foot and have eaten big fortunes—my faith, but life it is a strange comedy!"

"And I who imagined you were all so peaceful and saintly dwelling in this green oasis, this little world apart!" I observe reflectively.

The little Comtesse laughs her gay mocking laugh.

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"*Mon Dieu*, what will you? We have here *La Sœur Philipine* in miniature the world outside. A bucketful of sea water resembles still the ocean! It will throw off sparks of diamond in the dark, and show itself under the microscope as full of beasts terrible and hideous as the fathomless sea herself. *Hé bonjour ma sœur*," she cried as a dark-robed sister crossed the lawn. "But one neglects me to-day. For what, then, am I put in penitence?"

The tall, spare figure paused under the window, and across the pale, austere face flashed a rare glint of a smile as she returned the greeting with, "A thousand pardons, dear Comtesse; very soon I come!" and passed on quickly.

"There is one who shows forth as a diamond in the dark, the Sœur Philipine!" And looking after the sister, the eyes of the gay old lady shone with sudden tears. "You cannot imagine to yourself how I judged her falsely in the beginning," she sighed.

It was true, on their first acquaintance Madame de Montchesnay had summed up the Sœur Philipine with a shudder as a piece of machinery, minus all human

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La Sœur organs, "eye of flint, nerve of steel and
Philipine tongue like a razor." Undoubtedly Sœur
Philipine's capacity for spotting delinquencies,
added to a precision and punctuality to put
to shame a town clock, did not prepossess
one in her favour. Yet when the Comtesse
fell ill with bronchitis during that first bitter
winter, it was this machine-like woman who
stood by her bedside night after night nurs-
ing her devotedly, and her wiry hands, so
thin you could count every bone, which ten-
derly smoothed her pillow and ministered to
her needs. Those same hawk eyes, too,
grew misty with tender tears when the Com-
tesse showed her the photograph of her
niece's child, a laughing mischievous elf of
two summers.

From that time Madame de Montchesnay
met all detractors, and there were not a few,
with, "You know nothing you others, she
has the heart of gold, the Sœur Philipine,
me who tell you I have seen it."

Madame de Montchesnay has been a *pen-
sionnaire* at the Saint Joseph now for five
years. She speaks of it as *chez moi* with
a rather wistful look in her sweet old blue

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eyes, for there was a time when she had *Playing* dreamt of a very different *chez moi* as the *with fire* home of her old age. But things "fell badly" all round, and when an influential cousin offered to propose her for a vacancy in this aristocratic *asile*, paying the annual eight hundred francs necessary for the first few years, she took the advice of her staunch old friend, Madame d'Aville, and accepted the offer with gratitude.

Madame de Montchesnay is one of the many whose existence has long been brightened and lightened by our big-hearted Mémé, and though in bygone days she often shook her head over the Comtesse's methods of conducting *les affaires* she never failed to come to the rescue whenever her rash friend found herself in a tight place, and I shrewdly suspect this was pretty often. For the Comtesse unluckily cherished the delusion, during many years, that a rare talent for *les affaires* was her special gift.

"She possessed energy, originality, genius if you will, but in this one point she deceived herself," says Mémé. "Unhappily for him, her son Armand he also let himself be en-

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Unlucrative accomplishments trained by the enthusiasms of his mother. 'If thy poor father had but listened to my counsels,' his mother would sigh. 'But the unhappy one he eat up his own fortune and then also my *dot*. It remains to us now but the *débris* and thy little legacy from the good Aunt Hortense, may the *bon Dieu* reward her! But have thou confidence in me thy mother, and thou shalt see what I can accomplish!' So it arrived all was left in her hands, and soon ran through the fingers like water."

Mémé excuses Armand's easy acquiescence on the score of his temperament and aristocratic upbringing. For men of his class to do anything to earn a living had been considered bad form in his youth. The things he could do and do well were many and diverse, but *chose bizarre*, as his mother was wont to comment, most of them involved the spending and not the gaining of money. He could sit a horse with conspicuous grace, was a crack pigeon shot, a most skilful billiard player; he could write sonnets, really not bad, and recite them with much emotion and great effect; could lead a cotillon

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to perfection and roll a cigarette more deftly *The* and rapidly than any man at his *cercle. specula-* But alas for the sordid world in which he *tive spirit* found himself, when the bad days arrived not one of these charming accomplishments could be utilised to gain four sous.

As for Madame de Montchesnay, on reviewing the failures and disappointments which followed in a sadly unvarying sequence, she translated the quality she lacked into "*Hélas!* me, I have no luck!"

The final transaction which wiped out her last hope of that colossal fortune she had chased like a will-o'-the-wisp for fifteen years, and swallowed up her last roll of francs, was a grand speculation in "old masters."

Armand, with a hope which triumphed gloriously over experience, caught fire from his mother's enthusiasm as she unfolded to him her scheme. The failure of the Toxotolyte Destroyer Company coming on the top of Solomon's Mines, Machine-Made Diamonds, Communication with Mars Society, the Immortal Hair Renewer, etc., etc., had left him considerably depressed. He had nothing to live on save his *rentes*, and

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Too particular they were becoming microscopic. Working and begging were to him equally impossible. In marriage lay the only way of salvation, and that way, like all ways of salvation, was a narrow and difficult path.

For though Armand de Montchesnay turned out still faultlessly correct from head to foot "at four pins," every one knew he was "a boy not solid" — naught in fact but an airy bubble which might dissolve any day.

Time was, says Mémé, when Madame de Montchesnay could have demanded a really high price for her Armand, even as Mémé could at this moment for her Gustave; but in those days she had been so "difficult," no *partie* came up to her requirements. (I point out the obvious moral!) The *dot* of Mademoiselle de la Ville was not big enough. The family of Mademoiselle Binard was not aristocratic enough. The young widow Madame d'Estrelle, though possessed of both the former gifts, had a tired complexion and lacked the bloom of a virgin bride. The American belle, well, she was an American, and *Dieu merci*, but she left those persons

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there to the old *roués* who had no chance with their own peerless countrywomen! *Floating with the stream*

To all this Armand shrugged his shoulders with a light laugh. Had he been consulted, he would have contentedly married any one of these charmers proposed for him ; but he left the affair in his mother's hands, feeling it was, after all, her province.

"Provided only she is pretty, fresh, desirable, and that the *dot* fails not, arrange for me what thou wilt," said Armand, like any other good son of France.

And so the years had gone by, imperceptibly at first, but swiftly hurrying at last like a stream that nears the cataract, till Armand found himself sweeping towards the prosaic age of fifty unmated and without the solid foundation which might have made him still a desirable *parti*.

The "old masters" speculation shot like a rainbow across his darkening sky, bringing new hope to mother and son of adding to his marketable value. For now, alas, it was others who were "difficult" ; the exalted demands of poor Madame de Montchesnay having dwindled to the one humble desire

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*Inspired
connois-
seurship*

of finding her Armand "some one who would be kind to him when she was gone." Oh, now she did not require beauty, after all beauty only faded like a spring flower; nor birth, of what consequence such a detail when once one bears the name of Montchesnay? As to *dot*, well just enough to keep the little pot boiling, that would suffice.

Armand knew nothing of "old masters," but he had great confidence in his mother. She had always been considered a judge by the family. Take her into a gallery and she would tell you without the catalogue that the landscape with a yellow sunset and a cow was a Cuyp; the horseman outside an inn on a white charger was a Philip Wouvermanns, and so on. "It is intuitive," she told her wondering friends. Monsieur Mosés agreed with her. "Me, I have studied the old masters all my life, but me I have not the knowledge so penetrating of Madame la Comtesse! What I know it is learned; what madame knows it is inspired. *Voilà!*"

Whenever Monsieur Mosés heard of an exceptional chance, he flew to his inspired client and gave her the first refusal at "a

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friend's price." After a time the collection *M. Mosés* numbered no less than seven Raphaels, ten *and the* Titians, six del Sartos, six Wouvermanns *old mas-* (all with men on a white horse), three Cuyp *ters* sunsets, and some hundred and seventy lesser though still brilliant lights.

Every corner of her *appartement* was filled with works of art, estimated by herself and appreciative friends as representing at least five hundred thousand francs, the result of a judicious outlay of about fifty thousand francs to Monsieur Mosés. Then came a day when a marriage for Armand being "on the carpet" with a certain Mademoiselle Bernard, niece of the Abbé Bruin, a lady no longer in her first youth but very *comme il faut* and possessing a reliable if modest little *dot*, it became necessary to value the pictures. The abbé's lawyer and the valuer, men, alas, brutal and mercantile, pronounced them one and all "old crusts," good for nothing! Of course it was all finished with Mademoiselle Bernard.

An impassioned scene, at which Mémé was present, followed between mother and son, reproaches, lamentations, recriminations,

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In the Harbour of Refuge culminating in a tragic, "*Oh, mon Dieu, comme tu ressembles à ton père!*" (Oh, my God, how thou resemblest thy father!) from the Comtesse; and an equally tragic, "*Dame! comme je le plains, mon pauvre père!*" (By our lady, how I pity him, my poor father!) from her son, and ending in a mingling of tears in each other's arms.

A month later Madame de Montchesnay passed through the big doors of the Saint Joseph, and Armand installed himself in a neighbouring street with an astonishingly fine view of Paris and its environs from his one little window.

"One accustoms one's self," says the little Comtesse bravely; but the rule and routine were not easy to the gay old lady of the world. To sit in a big, bare austere dining-room with twenty-three other old ladies, each place indicated by the owner's bottle of wine, footstools (this was the sorest point of all) strictly prohibited, to be called at seven, rise at eight, and obliged to be in always at nine unless with special leave of absence, gave a sense of cage-bars and clipped wings hard to endure at first.

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But she had always a sunny smile ready *A faded* when Armand appeared, which he never *page from* failed to do once at least every day. This *the past* was her great consolation,—“the hour of Armand.”

When she had been a *pensionnaire* about a year a new and unexpected happiness came to *adoucir* her life.

One evening in the salon reserved as common ground for both *messieurs* and *mesdames les pensionnaires*, she perceived a stately figure advancing towards her from the *salle des messieurs*. She started; the past rose before her with the vividness and swiftness of a series of cinematograph pictures. The white convent walls were suddenly decked with garlands and mirrors. The strains of a gay waltz pulsed through the air. A brilliant company floated by, their laughter and chatter rang in her ears, as he stood and bowed before her. “Comtesse, I have the honour to claim this dance.” Ah, he had claimed a good deal besides that dance, but for the sake of her eight-year-old Armand she had said a last farewell to him that night. He went away,

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Time runs back to Algeria, to China, to the ends of the earth. He married, but the marriage had not marched well, it was said. More she never knew, had never seen him since. Now he was here bowing before her once again with silver head and bent shoulders, claiming — what was he claiming, this ghost from the dead past? He took her outstretched hands and pressed them to his lips reverently.

“Madame la Comtesse has not then forgotten the poor friend of her splendid youth?”

“To forget Henri de St. Ouen even after forty years for me is impossible,” she said softly.

So they took up the chain, the centre links of which were missing, and fastened the ends together once more, these two white-haired *pensionnaires* of the Saint Joseph.

Every day as the slow procession of ladies passed out after *déjeuner* he was waiting at the entrance to kiss her hand with his courtly, old-fashioned bow. Then, if the day were fine, they would stroll arm in arm round the convent garden, talking more often

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than not of Armand, for he was soon almost *An im-*
as great an object of interest and solici- *penetrable*
tude to the old Comte as to his mother. *barrier*

"A charming boy! It must be absolutely that he marries himself," was the Comte's invariable summing up of these *tête-à-têtes*.

Monsieur de St. Ouen had a niece, the only daughter of an only sister; charming and distinguished in appearance, to judge by the photographs which adorned her uncle's walls, absolutely angelic in character if one could trust his report of her.

But, alas, a prosaic material, red-faced, loud-voiced, seventeen stone stood like an impenetrable barrier between the fair Valérie and the new husband desired for her by the owners of the two white heads bent together so often in deep matrimonial design.

"If she were less of a saint she might with ease obtain a divorce," her uncle would sigh. "But she is a woman with a conscience exalted and *bizarre*. I say to her, 'Be reasonable, my child, your husband it is a man impossible, is it not so? Here I have for you a charming man who is ab-

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The barrier relentless solutely your affair. You possess the fortune sufficient for all the two. He on his side bestows on you a name and title among the oldest in France, instead of that one which has always recalled to me painfully the former *bourgeois* occupation of its owner. You gain also for your little Jules a father at the same time prudent and affectionate. On his account consider well, if not on your own.' But no, she obstinates herself and refuses to render happy her old uncle, devoting herself to a life of banishment in the Ardennes with this husband brutal and stupid !”

In spite of his niece's obstinacy, however, the old count never quite gave up hope of a divorce which should free her, and with renewed enthusiasm discussed the project daily with the Comtesse ; till on a day when meeting his friend he announced the news with a very long face that the seventeen stone had become suddenly immovable and paralysed, able only to be conveyed with difficulty and much strong language from one sofa to another.

“ Ah, the miserable one, so he holds her

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fast forever!" he cried in despair. "Now *Armand* indeed it is all finished with our poor *unruffled* Armand. It appears this malady is one to endure fifteen, twenty years. It kills first every one in the house, while the ill one becomes always more and more exacting and of a humour more and more abominable."

The mild expressions of sympathy for "the miserable one," which the tender-hearted Comtesse could not quite suppress, caused Monsieur de St. Ouen much irritation. "He has pulled on himself this malady just to complete the martyrdom of the poor Valérie," he declared.

As for Armand, from the first he had made a joke of the whole scheme. When the old Comte with tragic tones made known his news, "*Hélas le misérable*," said Armand, "and me I was on the point of sending to him my *témoins* to arrange the duel. Now it appears I am too late! It is only a Minister of the Cabinet who can challenge a man on a sofa!" (N. B. Armand dislikes the Republic.)

But *le misérable* accomplished a deed at last which gave hearty satisfaction to his wife's

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*A con-
summa-
tion de-
voutly to
be wished*

uncle. He curtailed the prophesied fifteen or twenty years and died suddenly at the end of only six months' illness.

Monsieur de St. Ouen was so pleased with him for thus meeting his wishes that he rewarded *le misérable* by paying for regular masses for his soul for several months, though the outlay involved considerable self-denial in abstaining from a favourite after-dinner cigarette and *liqueur*.

One afternoon Armand, on entering his mother's room, found seated there a charming, youthful-looking lady in deep mourning. As he drew both feet together and bowed, he felt strangely excited.

Outside in the convent garden rang the shrill laughter of a small boy racing like a terrier puppy round Monsieur de St. Ouen, whom he addressed as *mon oncle*.

Before that fair lady passed out of the big double doors of the convent, the fate of Armand de Montchesnay was decided.

It was the same evening of that eventful day that I met Madame de Montchesnay and her son for the first time. I had often heard of her and had even been offered

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Monsieur le Comte Armand de Montchesnay as a possible *futur*, but the Fates had willed we should never meet until too late—as far as any arrangement of that kind went. *The Comtesse communicative*

Uncle Jack and I were dining with the d'Avilles and Lefébres *en famille* that evening. Just before dinner the Comtesse de Montchesnay was unexpectedly announced. She entered in a whirlwind of excitement which made itself felt as the front door opened. *Hé bonjour Marthe, ma fille!* Assist me then to disencumber myself of my mantle. And Madame la Baronne she is *chez elle?* She is visible? *A la bonheur! Mon Dieu*, but can one see her at once, immediately? yes?"

Marthe the maid responded sympathetically in tones of equal excitement. Mémé caught the infection three rooms off, and rushed open-armed to greet her old friend.

"Embrace me then, *ma chérie*. My prayers are answered! *Le bon Dieu* has listened to me! All has accomplished itself to a marvel! But she is charming, the *fiancée* of Armand; she is the perfection itself,

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Con-
gratula-
tions ga-
lore

and a pretty little fortune, understand you, besides. The poor boy he is foolish with happiness; he follows me immediately to announce to you the good news himself, he but escorted his *fiancée* and her uncle to make a little tour in the Bois. After experiencing a so great emotion nothing like the full air, is it not so?"

Laughing and weeping, the old lady poured forth her torrent on the sympathetic bosom of Mémé, who, turning to Uncle Jack and me drew us into the whirlpool of emotion in which Gustave, Thérèse, Louis Lefèvre, and *le p'tit chou* were already immersed.

Uncle Jack, considering his British origin, played up manfully on this occasion. He congratulated the happy mother both in French and English, first shaking her two extended hands and then raising them gallantly to his lips.

"Ah, but how I adore the English!" cried Madame de Montchesnay enthusiastically. "The great regret of my life it is always that I did not espouse *un Anglais*."

Every one joined at the pitch of their voices in a sort of Hallelujah Chorus, em-

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bracing the old lady, and then each other, *There's* somewhat indiscriminately I thought. I *many a* was only just in time to present my hand to *slip, etc.* Louis Lefèvre as hostage for my cheek. "When Louis is emotioned he loses the head," explained Thérèse. "He imagines himself the godfather of all the pretty girls he sees."

Armand joined us during the second course. His arrival added fresh fuel to the fire. Champagne was uncorked, speeches made, tears shed, and *bons mots* tossed like shuttlecocks from one to the other.

Gustave and I, as the two unattached members of the company, were signalled out for a volley of *badinage*, started in the first instance by Marthe, Mémé's confidential maid, who assisted in waiting at the table. (N. B. Most of Mémé's servants are confidential.) In a loud aside she observed to me as we all clinked glasses, "What a pity that it is not for mademoiselle also that one now wishes the happiness of the married one!"

The voice of the little *chou*, which had kept up an unceasing, though hitherto un-

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*Le p'tit
chou irre-
pressible* heeded, chatter, was here raised an octave higher as she declared her conviction that Marthe's suggestion might easily be carried out, for one could see well *l'oncle* Gustave wished nothing better than to take me as his *fiancée*, in spite of his saying, "Oh, yes, he said it very surely," that it was *des jeunes filles comme ma c'sine* Betty who finish by making the *coiffure* of the Sainte Catharine!

Her parents both made desperate efforts to suppress the terrible infant, but from her vantage point of the opposite side of the table she waived a defiant spoon, while Uncle Jack, as usual, encouraged her, shouting, "Bravo! Well said. That is just what I am always telling her myself! Eh, Betty, you've got it quite squarely this time!"

Gustave sprang up and tied his *serviette* across the small mouth which was clearly preparing to launch another bomb. "Little viper, but what lies abominable and atrocious thou dost utter!"

"And thou, what dost thou know of the Sainte Catharine, little foolish one!" cried her father.

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Jacqueline wriggled her head free and shrieked :

“ But it is true, true what I say, and me I know well what it means the Sainte Catharine. It is my Mémé who told me, she claims to coif her all the ‘ old girls.’
La coiffure de Sainte Catharine
Voilà ! ”

“ Do not scream so high. Thou wilt crack the ears of all the world, my little cabbage, my pigeon,” said Mémé.

“ *Bien !* Let all the world listen well, and I speak like a little cat.” She lowered her voice to a prim pur. “ If me I was in the place of my cousin Betty I would prefer to espouse even this ugly wicked *coquin* Gustave — but yes — than to make the *coiffure* of the Sainte Catharine. I have taken her *en grippe* the Sainte Catharine ! ”

“ Me also, I love her not too much,” laughed Madame de Montchesnay.

“ Oh, for me I find she is very indulgent, the good saint. Me I have coifed her already many years, see you Mademoiselle Jacqueline ! ” said Count Armand.

The little *chou* turned her battery promptly in his direction.

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Sauve qui peut: “But no, but no, you say that to laugh only. It is never *les messieurs* who coif the Sainte Catharine. The *concierge* she has explained to me well all that. It appears *les messieurs* they find always some pretty little friends to amuse them — always, always. And you also, Monsieur le Comte, yes?”

But this question was never answered.

The conversation took a sudden turn, and every one at once seemed to be asking Madame de Montchesnay to recount the history of the engagement. She did so, Armand listening as eagerly as the rest of us, in no wise embarrassed; on the contrary, helping his mother out and supplementing the story where he could.

It appeared that afternoon on his way to the convent he had experienced a strange presentiment. Louis Lefèbre maintained he also had felt the same before all great crises of his life, and Jacqueline, in spite of a vehement *tais toi* from her mother, with her hand on her sash, declared she had the feeling *à l'instant meme*.

“Strange, also,” continued the count, “on entering the room, the charming figure in

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deep mourning seemed familiar as some *Fatalistic* cherished memory." Perhaps being the *presentiments* original of many photographs shown him by Monsieur de St. Ouen, an explanation would not be far to find. But we all agreed it was "a circumstance very remarkable."

"The voice was delicious, like the voice of *une anglaise*," continued Monsieur de Montchesnay with a bow towards me. "The face of a rare and *piquante* beauty, tint pale and transparent, the eyes large, melancholy, alluring, the figure of a suppleness, a grace!"

Enfin, to see this lady was, he gave us to understand, to experience the feelings of a moth for the candle, a needle for the magnet.

"I can tell you no more," said the Comte. "You understand well how I feel myself, all *bouleversé* with emotion." He placed his hand on his heart and looked round the table with a delicious confidence in our sympathetic comprehension.

His mother took up the story. "It was the little Jules, the adorable infant, who settled the affair," she declared. "He took Armand to the heart in the moment of

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*Another
young
Ascanius*

seeing him. After mounting on his shoulder and making the tour, in this fashion, of the garden, the chapel, the salons, he accorded to him the invitation, *sur le champ*, to come and install himself at the château in *les Ardennes*.

"*C'était impayable,*" declared the Comte. "The little one he assured me, all seriously, 'there is much place for you down there, and it is very agreeable and quiet now that *le bon Dieu* has taken the poor papa to the Paradise with him!'"

"But the climax it was when he prayed his mother," continued the old Comtesse; "'Dost thou not desire him to come, *maman?*' he asks, 'me I find him so *gentil*, and yet thou repliest not!' Figure to yourselves this child, the tears in the eyes, the heart all swollen! For me you understand well it was too much, I caught the little love in my arms, pressed him to my heart and saved myself with him, leaving with Monsieur de St. Ouen the two who felt their hands thus irresistibly united by the innocent will of the child. For what passed after this I leave it to my son to recount,

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hein, Armand? Regard then the cunning *Jacqueline and Jules* one, how he smiles always and holds himself back to tell us nothing!"

Mémé, like her old friend the Comtesse, was by this time both laughing and weeping. The little *chou* regarded her tears critically.

"And my Mémé who weeps! But no, for such affairs one must not weep, one must not! He did very well, the little Jules. Me, I think I will decide myself to espouse the little Jules. In my opinion he should be *très gentil*, that boy there!"

Poor Thérèse made futile attempts to check her forward daughter, but the little *chou's* announcement was hailed with delight both by the Montchesnay, mother and son, and by *l'oncle Jackot*, from whom the practical *chou* then and there extracted the promise of a *grosse dot*.

"To be married that must be excellent," reflected Mademoiselle Jacqueline; for Madame de l'Abbadie she said to *l'oncle* Gustave "when one is married then one knows all!"

"Mix me not in thy scandals, little

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Murder will out coquine," cries Gustave. "Me I deny these conversations with Madame de l'Abbadie."

Rash Gustave, now he gets it all!

"But yes, but yes," insists the *chou*. "Me I remember very well how thou didst embroil thyself with M'ame de l'Abbadie for the cause of the hair of *ma c'sine* Betty. It was not the false *nattes*, it was her own hairs didst thou swear. And M'ame de l'Abbadie she put herself in an anger. 'All those hairs could not be her own,' she said. 'Thou couldst know nothing' she said, 'till thou wert married to *ma c'sine*, not more than *la p'tite* Jacqueline there,' she said. But she deceived herself, for me I know very well — but yes!"

The *chou* nodded her head impressively in my direction while Uncle Jack, backed by an eager chorus, demanded, "How dost thou know, say then?"

"If one ask me, then one must not scold when I say — is it not so?" bargained the cautious little cabbage. "Me I know," she proceeded, "for me I went one morning like a little cat of velvet paws so softly to the room of *ma c'sine*, and while she slept

THE ASILE SAINT JOSEPH

I pulled her the long plait of hair. I pulled *Quod erat* so hard she woke herself and *Oh, mon Dieu, demon-* how she scolded me severely! But me I *strandum* knew by that that the hairs were planted well in the head, *voilà!*"

This explained a very unpleasant awakening I experienced one morning while we were at Neuilly together. Oh, that little *chou!*

Before we parted Madame de Montchenay, embracing me on both cheeks, made me promise to come and visit her soon and often.

"I shall feel myself very *triste*, and need much that one consoles me," she said. "My son he is now lost to me. Ah, but yes! I know it well, though he tells me, of course, the old history that I have but gained a daughter."

Mémé and I found her anything but lonely, however, when we called a few days later. She was holding quite a reception. The charming widow, recognisable at once from the Comte's description, the match-making old uncle, Monsieur de St. Ouen, to

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

A composite relation whom I promptly lost my heart, the small boy Jules, all eyes and collar, the Sœur Philippine, and of course the enraptured *fiancé*, all were there. As chairs could not be supplied for so many, Jules and I sat on the bed and drank tea, supposed to be *à l'anglaise*, of a very pale yellow, with lemon juice instead of milk. Jules and I became most intimate, and in less than ten minutes I was adopted in the treble capacity of *tante*, *marraine*, and *fiancée*. We kissed each other *au revoir à bientôt* with much fervour.

Since that day I have often found my way to the convent *Asile*, and have drank yellow tea with the Comtesse till I have grown quite to like it, especially when seasoned with the dear old lady's spicy conversation.

.....
About a year ago, the time of mourning having duly expired, Monsieur de Montchesnay accepted the invitation of Jules, and paid his first visit to *les Ardennes* in the capacity of that young gentleman's stepfather. And the other day the Comtesse

THE ASILE SAINT JOSEPH

was heard to say to Monsieur de St. Ouen, *The west-*
as that lover of her youth bent over her *ern glow*
hand, "Know you, my friend, that we may
yet have grandchildren besides the children
whom we share, you and I, as hand in hand
we journey towards the west?"

A PLAGE DE FAMILLE

*Mémé's
Mecca*

MONSIEUR LOUIS LEFÈBRE, Mémé's doctor and son-in-law, was responsible for our visit to Dôsne-sur-mer. He despotically ordered Mémé off there for a month. She had quite other views for the summer, had never heard of Dôsne, and never desired to do so. But Mémé has a superstitious fear of going against her son-in-law in his capacity of doctor. I don't think it extends beyond that domain, but the hardened unbeliever, both in medicine and religion, has always, I notice, a harbour of refuge in some pet credulity of his own, and Mémé's invincible contempt for all the learned faculty is balanced by her slavish attitude towards this one. "You need repose and change of air. I have your affair exactly. It is Dôsne-sur-mer," he announced decisively.

"Repose and change of air, yes, without doubt that is good," agreed Mémé. "But, Louis, my friend, why hast thou burrowed

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out for me this unhappy hole, of which one *The vir-*
has never before heard? I shall die of *tues of*
ennui in the twenty-four hours! There are *Dôsne*
baths of the sea one can support; why, then,
this *maudit Dôsne*?"

"Because, my poor Mémé, this *maudit*
Dôsne it is which will oblige you to repose
yourself. Your dear friends who kill you,
the life of Paris which burns you up like dry
wood, all this cannot touch you at *Dôsne*.
The air is pure as by the Pole of the
North."

"*Oh-la-la*, that I can well believe!"
ejaculated Mémé with a shudder. "The
Pole of the North, that is where one sends
me."

"Ninety-five per cent of ozone in sea
and sand," went on Monsieur Lefèvre.
"The little children, *chétives* and drooping,
fatten themselves like chickens for the mar-
ket; the old people, withered and dried-up
fagots, rejuvenate themselves and find new
sap running in their veins."

"If it is good for the children, then me I
take there *le p'tit chou*," said Mémé. "With-
out that I go not; there is my decision."

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*The
angelic
pigeon
towers
again*

But Jacqueline's father refused absolutely to consent.

"If you take that little devil there, better you rest at home, as well make a tour in charge of a *ménagerie*! Me I forbid it that you speak of the sea to that child. Already she has told me to command a *costume de bain* for this season when she travels with her Mémé. Me I reply, 'Thy Mémé is sick, she goes to a hospital where one admits not children.' Then follows a scene, a *tapage* to crack the ears; *de grâce*, let it not recommence!"

"The dear little pigeon, the angel," said Mémé; and of course it ended in the angelic pigeon being allowed to go. Monsieur Lefèvre gave way when at Mémé's entreaty I promised to go and act as a buffer between Mémé and her granddaughter.

At the last moment Jacqueline's faithful attendant, Julie, failed us, being sent for by a sick mother in Provence. We were all "in the despair" except Louis Lefèvre, who saw in this obstacle a merciful interposition of Providence, when suddenly Uncle Jack's American friend, Mrs. Hamilton P. Chadwick, came to the rescue.

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“Why, I’ve gotten the vurry thing for *Mrs.* you, a pillar of strength, a purfect pearl *Chad-* among women, as Solomon has it. She’s *wick’s* Scotch, with a splendid accent, just pure *jewel* Gaelic, and a soul like some grand Hebrew prophetess. You’ll just love her, every one of you,” said Mrs. Chadwick.

I suggested that the little *chou* would not understand Gaelic, and I feared was unused to anything in the nature of a Hebrew prophetess. Besides, how would a maid like to undertake the duties of nurse?

“My dear Mona Lisa” (Mrs. Chadwick insists that I am a reincarnation of that lady!), “don’t you worry any. Margaret is no maid, except in the sense of being an irreproachably pure virgin. She’s a thorough nurse, and times are I can tell you when I need one as much as any newborn babe. The child does n’t draw breath who would n’t simply adore Margaret at the end of twenty-four hours. I guess she’d cast a spell over a Hottentot baby if she wanted to. She can’t speak French, she won’t. Margaret would as soon demean her tongue by uttering the ridiculous sounds of any foreign lan-

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*O rare
Margaret
Mac-
Dowall* guage as clothe herself in paint and feathers, but she gets along somehow. Hear her give that old *concierge* a piece of her mind for trying to bully me the other day, and see how the woman just coiled up! She's wonderful, is Margaret; she'll take you all three in hand, and you'll feel just as when one of those grand, godlike policemen takes you in tow at a London crossing. I tell you it's a rare chance you've happened on if Margaret MacDowall allows she'll go with you. She's been with me two years, and I say 'grace' for her every night of my life. I don't want to take her this next short trip I'm makin' to Noo York 'cause she's a poor sailor, her one and only defect; so there's six weeks she's free till I come back and we go to London for a spell: that's where she's happy. She has never gotten used to foreign lands, but she sticks to me, thank the Lord. Come and see her right away!"

So I went "right away" and interviewed Margaret MacDowall for Mémé. I found a sturdy, straightforward, capable-looking woman of about forty, with a singularly

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pleasant, rather rare smile. It was the smile *Margaret's* decided me, making me feel somehow as if I *versatility* had known her a long time and could trust her to the ends of the earth.

She seemed in no way dismayed at the prospect of the little *chou*, said she quite understood from Mrs. Chadwick she was to "undertake two leddies" as well, and was prepared to do so. When I disclaimed the need of any special care for myself, Margaret MacDowall replied firmly that she hoped she knew her duty to any young leddy she travelled with. "And glad enough you'll be to have somebody decent to look after the brushing of yer skirts and sich like. I ken fine they feckless foreign hoosemaids."

Mrs. Chadwick had described Margaret accurately in saying she inspired the same feeling as those beneficent giants, the London policemen.

On the railway journey to Dôzne-sur-mer Margaret began to reveal her powers. How she contrived it I don't know, but she managed to separate Jacqueline from her Mémé; and when I looked into their carriage at Amiens, the little cabbage and her "Mar-

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Hôtel de la Plage got" were absorbed in making a fleet of paper boats.

"Me I am very occupied. Go thou," she said with a wave of dismissal, "and take care of my Mémé. Margot and me we must finish these ships to sail on the big beautiful sea where we go —"

"It is the good God who has sent us that Margaret," said Mémé fervently. "With Julie last year we journeyed in a fashion very fatiguing. Jacqueline, the poor little darling, desired to change the carriages at each station; when it was not possible, she screamed like a lost one."

After accomplishing our train journey and winding up with a drive of five kilos over a rough road in the jolty hotel omnibus, we found ourselves and baggage pitched out on the sand near an enormous wooden edifice, the *Hôtel de la Plage*. Our first impression was that we had reached what Americans call "the jumping-off place." Sand, sea, and sky stretch in long straight lines right across the world from east to west, and not a thing besides to be seen except a *châlet* dotted here and there in the sand, and a

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fishing boat here and there in the sea. The *Enter le* sun blazes down on the brown-flecked sand- *patron* dunes, untempered by any touch of green or shade of tree, but you feel here at least is ozone pure and uncontaminated.

Monsieur *le patron*, short, stout, red, bristling with importance in a vast white waistcoat, came forward to greet us. Yes! he had reserved rooms, though the season was at its height and the hotel full to the brim. Five families had been refused that day only! Rooms on the *plage*? Ah, but no, but no, impossible! Rooms on the garden we could have or could reject as we pleased. To him it was quite indifferent.

"But I wrote a week ago and received your reply that we could have rooms on the *plage* to-day," said Mémé.

How could Madame la Baronne have the rooms of which he had written when they were still occupied? In one alone there found themselves a distinguished notary, together with his lady and two, three, four babies; so full was the hotel!

"Two babies, *mon ami*, not four," came a mild voice from the *bureau*.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*An adamantine
despot*

"Leave me then tranquil," snapped the *patron*, and continued to pour forth his torrent. Could he make to depart his more ancient clients? Could he have rooms specially constructed for these ladies? Was he not the proprietor? Did he not know his own business? And many other questions in a tone of rising excitement. Again the voice of mild remonstrance struck in :

"As soon as the rooms on the *plage* are vacant they shall be for these ladies. *Mon ami*, you will do well now to show Madame la Baronne the numbers sixty-four and sixty-five which are prepared for her."

"But yes, but yes. *Sapristi!* And am I not in train to show to Madame the apartments? What will you have? Impossible to give satisfaction!"

We followed Mr. Fireworks upstairs and down endless long bare corridors.

"*Voilà!*" he cried triumphantly at last, opening the door of No. 64.

We entered a small bare room, devoid of blind or curtain, containing a chair and a

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bed, and the smallest washstand ever seen *The garden of the prospectus* outside a doll's house. The window opened on a stable yard.

"Where is the garden?" I inquired rashly.

"The garden! But he finds himself *là bas* the garden! What will you? There is the acacia tree of which a picture exists in the prospectus." He pointed to a skinny little tree shrinking against the wall.

"Me I find that garden there altogether ugly," announced the little *chou*. "Me I prefer the garden of my Mémé at Neuilly." She leaned her small person far out of the window, while Margaret clutched her firmly. "A garden quite ridiculous, a dirty little garden," she pronounced.

The *patron* wheeled round on Margaret. "Remove that infant, if you please. With that chatter one renders me demented; impossible to arrange affairs with Madame while it continues."

"Take her downstairs, will you, Margaret?" I said. "This gentleman has evidently very sensitive nerves."

"Nerves did ye say, miss! My word,

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Wash- anybody would think the man was clean daft
stands at the way he's going on," commented Mar-
a premium garet as she decoyed her charge from the
room with extraordinary and beguiling
sounds to which the little *chou* responded
as though Margaret had been a veritable
Pied Piper.

"Can you give us some more furniture?
a cupboard, a small table, somewhere to
arrange our affairs?" I asked meekly.

"*Ah, mon Dieu*, how can I have cupboards
and tables to produce for all? There are
persons who are already waiting a month for
a washstand; they get him not. Madame
has here a bed, a chair, and a handsome
washstand for herself alone. Mademoiselle
also the same."

With difficulty we got a room for Margaret
and Jacqueline just above us, *monsieur le*
patron piling up the francs as he saw our
weariness and anxiety to settle the matter.

After a simple meal *à part, table d'hôte*
being over, we retired to our prophet's
chambers, thankful for the one thing you
can depend upon, even in the remotest parts
of France — a good bed.

A P L A G E D E F A M I L L E

I was awakened before dawn by a cock. *Pre-* His crow had the same tone of nervous *matutinal* excitement as the voice of *le patron*. After *music* a time another cock struck up an answering crow, with an almost human sound. I listened, then got up and looked out. The cock was at the window just above me and in the very act of winding up a prolonged "oodle-oo" when it changed into a shriek of gleeful laughter, and an impish face disappeared, as I heard Margaret's, —

"Whisht noo, ma bairnie, for the Lord's sake, or ye'll be waking that mad French mannie."

After that the pigs began. Then the dogs chimed in. The peaceful garden of the prospectus was the noisiest of stable and farm yards. Poor Mémé, so this was Louis Lefèbre's peace and quiet! But in spite of my indignation I fell asleep and did not waken till the little *chou* burst in, followed by Margaret. The latter announced with grim triumph, as she poured the water into my rubber bath, "I grabbit this can while their backs were aboot. Jest fancy a drappie like this set out for the hale landing!"

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Margaret on French bathing "Look thou at my *costume-de-bain*," cried Jacqueline, leaping on my bed. "Is he *chic* my costume, say thou?" She strutted on the bed in her blue serge bathing suit trimmed with smart white silk collar and frills.

"I canna say I think the trews are bonnie for a lassie, but she was fair set on it, and it's nae weel to fash them ower muckle," observed Margaret. "But oh, the awfu' sechts I've seen this morning, I'd be fair affronted to tell ye."

Of course I asked eagerly what they were. Margaret's uplifted hands and eyes indicated the inadequacy of mere words to convey any true idea.

"It's an awfu' thing to say, but there were grown men and women just stravaging up and down the public stairs with ne'er a decent dud to their backs and nae a stocking among them. Through the hall they went, bold as brass, and out of doors to the sea." She shuddered at the bare remembrance.

Thinking guiltily of what my own box contained, I suggested an extenuating circumstance in the long *sortie-de-bain*.

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"Cloaks my word! They would need *Jacqueline and le patron* them," Margaret observed sternly. "Do you think cloaks is sufficient with sech figures as these foreign French folk?"

"French ideas are so different to ours," I began feebly.

"Well, I would think so, and the Lord be thankit!" Margaret rejoined.

I found that Jacqueline had been up and doing for two hours past. Margaret told me she had already had two pitched battles with the red-faced *patron*. "The bairnie doesna mind him; but I'm thinking he'll be complaining aboot her to madam!"

"Recount to me all thou hast done, *p'tit chou*," I demanded.

"Me I played the piano," acknowledged Jacqueline; "a famous duet of four hands with the little Paul, a boy altogether charming who finds himself in the salon. When see there the man of the red face who enters and enrages himself like the *malhonnête* he is, shuts by key the piano, and all is finished! What I said to him? I said 'the word,' *cochon*, but yes, and he merited it well."

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An inventory of sins "What more didst thou? Continue," I said sternly.

Margaret listened, lost in wonder at the sight of a baby talking French.

"Then me and the little Paul we went with Margot to take our coffee and milk. One desired to place us at an ugly table, ugly but ugly, which lacked a cloth, with people ordinary and badly-raised, who drank their coffee out of a *crucbe* enormous and villainous instead of the little pots apart, as one has at Trouville. Me I refused to seat myself with that *canaille*, and placed myself and the little Paul at a nice little table apart. Then came the red-faced one and would have removed me, but me I made for him a scene and shrieked so loud all the world had fear, and *enfin* one left me in peace by my little table. Is it not so, Margot? And Margot she too was happy; she embroidered herself finely also with *le patron*. Ah but yes, we amused ourselves very well," reflected the little cabbage.

I explained to Margaret the awful significance of the word used by Jacqueline, and Margaret committed it carefully to

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memory, in order to prohibit the use of it in *The veto* future, murmuring again and again, "Co-^{of supplé-}shong — co-shong," to the delight of the ^{ments} incorrigible *chou*.

"Margot she has said the word! *Oh-la-la!* the wicked Margot, but she must enter into the black cupboard *c'sine* Betty, *n'est-ce pas?*"

It was with difficulty I smoothed down the ruffled plumes of the turkey-cock *patron*. The next time that infant badly-raised insulted him or his hotel we should all be packed off at an hour's notice. For the table and the coffee apart every day, we must pay a *supplément* of one franc a head.

As time went on I found life consisted in continual *suppléments*. The idea that we were going to live for nine or ten francs a day was purely illusory — supplements grow and multiply like the grain of mustard seed.

Each matter was referred to *monsieur le patron*; his sovereignty being as absolute as that of Abdul Hamid or Kaiser Wilhelm. There was not a corner or cranny, however remote, in the gigantic wooden *Hôtel* de

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*The
Jove-like
"c'est
fini!"*

la Plage, which *monsieur le patron* did not penetrate. His eye was like a search-light, the breath of his nostrils as smoking flax. His presence, even when bodily absent, pervaded. Any one who incurred his displeasure — and this could be done in a thousand ways impossible for the most intuitive to foresee — was summarily dismissed. Piff-paff! the delinquent vanished into thin air. "*C'est fini!*" cried *monsieur le patron*, his two little fat hands raised with a warning menace; and woe be to the rash one who attempted to reopen the subject. His forbearance in giving us a second chance was most unusual.

Waiters and chambermaids quitted in batches, their places filled up by newcomers (engaged by the long-suffering madame), who in their turn fizzled up suddenly and went out.

The same treatment was meted out to the guests, for personal interest had no weight with *le patron* when sense of outraged authority was in the scales. One day it was a large, comfortable *bourgeois* family from Amiens, baby and all, packed off before nightfall; the next morning, an indignant

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officer and his wife, the former having ordered the waiter to abstain from putting out the gas while he finished a letter. On another occasion the victims were an invalid lady and her daughter who had the imprudence to ring their bell a third time, having done so twice ineffectually. *Le patron* himself answered the third summons in a state of seething wrath. *The victims of Jove*

“Ha! so it was the number 96 who was entertaining the world with this game of bell ringing! This *tapage affreux* in his hôtel! Madame imagined to herself then that he had bells erected for her to pull at like a sexton, and nothing for his servants to do but mount and descend the stairs for her pleasure! Well, she should see—oh, but assuredly yes! To-morrow evening he reclaimed his rooms. It was finished, *Dieu merci!*”

After this dramatic monologue, another rule was added to the already formidable list to be observed by the clients of *monsieur le patron, i. e.*, a heavy fine like that incurred in railway carriages for ringing the alarm bell without due cause.

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

Dôsne
'neatb
ungenial
skies

Margaret and I went out on a tour of inspection to see if any rooms could be found under a less rigorous rule. But our *patron* was, alas, without rivals. A few *cafés* only have made their appearance in Dôsne, the better class of French visitors all taking *châlets* for the season. We returned feeling very depressed. Since, however, we found ourselves installed in this particular *galère*, I urged Mémé to try and bear up, with the assistance of *suppléments*, for three weeks longer.

But there was one *supplément* for which the soul of poor Mémé pined and no number of francs could purchase, namely, a little peace and quiet.

For the first three days a driving mist of rain alternated with a furious gale, which, lashing the sand into clouds, stifled and blinded the unfortunate one who ventured out. We were getting a good deal besides the ozone promised by Louis Lefèvre!

The children were everywhere, thick as the sand. There were only two sitting-rooms, the billiard-room where the portly *père de famille* smoked strong cigars and

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drank his *petit verre*, and the *salon*, a long bare room with a crazy piano, and a row of chairs and sofas against the wall. This latter was the playground of some fifty children ; very good children in their way, but not what their most partial friends could call quiet. They never were tired, and, to Margaret's indignation never went to bed before their parents.

The population of the Plage

At a quarter to ten, by order of *le patron*, all lights were turned out, and you groped your way up to bed as best you could. No one rebelled, even the *père de famille* went off without a murmur, though a game of billiards was at its height and a cigar but half finished. Imagine an English "family father" of any class submitting to this kind of discipline when taking his summer holiday !

Mercifully the bad weather did not last, and with the friendly aid of *madame la patronne*, who remembered her promise to us on the departure of the distinguished notary and his family, life was soon made quite bearable with a sea view from our rooms, and other amenities. But the strain on our

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The lot of Madame la Patronne nerves to avoid collision with *le patron* was severe and unceasing. He was as sensitive to neglect as to too much attention from his clients, and walking warily on a boundary line as narrow as a razor was no easy matter. As a rule we avoided all conversation except the morning *bonjour monsieur*, but on one occasion, thinking this sounded a trifle meagre, Mémé supplemented it with, "*Quel mauvais temps, n'est-ce pas ?*"

"Pardon, madame," snapped *le patron*, "I have no time to occupy myself with such matters. Will you, if you please, address all your complaints at the *caisse*. Madame my wife finds herself installed there for the express purpose!"

Poor Madame! Her worn, harassed look as she sat from morn till eve at her *bureau* making out the accounts, settling the appointment of rooms, listening to endless complaints, and perpetually trying to smooth down the ruffled plumage of her irascible lord, won our heartfelt sympathy. To be *Kaiserin* even at Dôsné is no sinecure.

But with the return of fine weather, life

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went on smoothly in an even routine of *Dôsne* eating, sleeping, bathing, and lazing. A *versus* stranger contrast to the gay and giddy *Trouville* Trouville season last year at the *châlet* of Madame de Fluery cannot be imagined.

It was difficult to imagine these weighty, worthy, eminently respectable *bourgeois* from Amiens, Nantes, Lilles, etc., of the same nationality as the gay, volatile, elegant butterflies of Trouville, all *frou-frous*, nerves, and intrigues. At Dôsne families consorted together with the domestic fidelity of birds and beavers. No one made *le flirt* with other people's wives and husbands. The very idea was grotesque in presence of these big, comfortable "family fathers" and "family mothers." The bathing parties, whose costumes at first so scandalized Margaret, consisted invariably of Monsieur and Madame often as not arm in arm, with their graduated string of Babettes, Ninettes, Pierrots, Polos, and Totos on either side. *L'enfant unique* is a rarity among this class, and judging from the full quivers to be seen at Dôsne, I should think the idea of the French population diminishing is a needless scare.

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*The belle
of Plage*

Their aquatic sports are of the mildest, mostly splashing and shrieking. We did not go in either for the exquisite *toilettes* or the smart, swimming, floating matches, and quadrilles of Trouville. For one thing, most of us had developed too much *embonpoint* for energetic exercise.

Beauty and fashion were represented in the person of the little proprietress of a Parisian *café*, sent, like Mémé, to lie *perdue* at Dôgne in order to remake herself. Her costumes, both in and out of the water, created what must have been, to her, a most gratifying sensation. The little *chou* was so filled with admiration and envy by a primrose silk bathing suit embroidered with green seaweed and a coquettish little cap edged with gold coins, that she announced she had no longer the courage to wear her old chiffon, so *démodé* did she now perceive it to be! She begged Mémé, if she had any love for her granddaughter, to order for her a costume like that of the lady "so elegant and chic."

"For next season, my little cabbage, my pigeon, thou shalt have it," promised Mémé

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after considerable pressure brought to bear *The*
in the form of threatened crises alternating *lemon-*
with beguiling wiles. *coloured*
Viscomte

The scarcity of *jeunes filles* and still more so of *jeunes gens* made even the harmless little *affaires* and *flirts* of youth (always conducted well *en evidence*) a rarity on our *plage* at Dôsné.

The only specimens of *jeunes gens* were a medical student attached to the convalescent hospital, two worn-out youths "making the commerce" at Amiens, and appearing merely at the week's end, and a funny little lemon-coloured Vicomte like a shrivelled autumn leaf. The white waistcoats and bows of the latter were exquisite, but he was very retiring, and restricted his few ceremonious remarks exclusively to Mémé. We, at least Jacqueline and I, were more expansive in our acquaintance. I had sometimes as many children round me as the old woman who lived in a shoe; but I could always get rid of them when I wished it by appealing to Margaret. Mrs. Chadwick had not exaggerated her powers of magnetic attraction for infants of all colours and sizes. It lay

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Margaret's accomplishments chiefly, I think, in her imperturbable calm and the endless variety of her accomplishments.

There was nothing Margaret could not teach you to do. And the moment you got bored with one thing, she had another to suggest. Even darning a stocking was found an exciting diversion under her auspices; both Jacqueline and Paul spent a whole afternoon employed in this useful way.

Mémé and I hired a tent for the benefit of its shadow, which, supplemented by the shade cast by a friendly old boat deeply rooted in the sand, enabled us to dodge the blazing sun, and sit out by the hour reading and sketching while the glistening sea crept slowly up, breaking with a laughing ripple into delicious little soft curling waves at our feet and then gradually receding nearly a mile out.

But we were not always permitted this sweet peace and quiet alone.

There was one *jeune fille* and her mother who made most persistent advances to us. They planted themselves in the shadow of our tent, and I heard the mother counsel her daughter to practise well her English

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phrases with me, for I appeared *une jeune fille* *The advances of Louise* *très comme il faut*. Very flattering, no doubt, but such admiration has its drawbacks.

“Mees loff moch ze paint?” begins the young lady, drawing near. I never can talk intelligibly while I am sketching, so I answer, half absently, that I adore paint of all colours.

“And mademoiselle make also ze musique? Ah! but you’ve all ze talens! It is long time zat you stay to Dôsne?”

And then follows an adroitly searching catechism, which in self-defence I have at last to turn on Mademoiselle Louise. She desired nothing better, however, and soon confides to me that she has nearly all her *trousseau* complete.

Next day I was invited to her room to view some of her own and the household linen, all of which she had herself embroidered with her initials. But when I happened to refer to her *fiancé*: “Oh, for the *fiancé*, there is none for the moment,” said madame, to my surprise; while the fair Louise laughed.

“The *fiancé* he presses not; that is an affair which demands not a long preparation. But for the *trousseau* and the *armoire* well pro-

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Taking
time by
the fore-
lock*

vided it is necessary to commence early if one desires a *ménage* well ordered."

Le p'tit chou, overhearing this remark, went off the same day to the bazaar (our only shop) with her Margot, and laid out all her capital in two big towels which she commenced embroidering immediately with her initials and a coronet selected on the advice of the shop girl in anticipation of her probable destiny. When her faithful slave, the little Paul, came to fetch her for a game, she sent him off discomfited.

"Impossible, seest thou. Me I am too occupied. I make my *trousseau*. One cannot commence too soon if one desire to have a *ménage* well ordered."

The little *chou* was soon the chosen sovereign of a large circle of devoted subjects, of both sexes, her first victim, Paul, being appointed Grand Vizier to her autocratic Majesty, whose demand for moated châteaux, Monte Cristo islands, Bastilles, and Tuileries was simply insatiable.

Dôsne is the children's paradise. Not a cry is heard, not a tear is seen, on that happy *plage*, though many a small cripple and

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invalid find their way there. Fathers, *The de-*
mothers, and nurses look on like benign *lights of*
Olympians enjoying the little mortals' pure *Dôsne*
rejoicing in this life of *sans-gêne* and liberty.

The *bourgeois père de famille* is as good as a mother, and constantly fulfils what are considered in England as exclusively her duties. Boys and girls, for the most part dressed alike in tiny breeches and blue jerseys, barelegged and barefooted, live half in the water, half out, playing all day at Tritons and mermaids, dragons and princesses. Mild-eyed cows and goats walk up and down the *plage* ready to supply a refreshing draught; while a whole live nigger lends a touch of reality to the wildest flights of fancy, as he marches to and fro with his alluring cry of *Le bon nougat! le bon nougat!*

In the evening Mémé and I sat out on the wide verandah, deserted by all but the little lemon-coloured Vicomte, unobtrusively seated at the farthest end, and sipped our (*supplément*) *café noir*, as the sun dropped down into the sea in a blaze of glorious light and colour. From the salon came

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*The
mariner's
lode-star*

the sounds of revelry, dancing and singing, so softened by distance, however, that even the most piercing operatic *roulades* failed to disturb the exquisite peace of those starry nights. Nowhere can be seen such sunsets, and nowhere a prettier sight than the fishing boats, flying home like birds to roost, with wide-spread sails, the women, in red petticoats and white caps, wading in to meet them, and piling up their baskets with the shining mackerel. And my thoughts would take wing to a ship sailing far up in the north, among the icebergs. When would it, too, fly home to roost?

Then one by one the stars lit up, more stars, and larger, than anywhere else, and the sea merged into the sky, leaving only a brilliant fringe of shining phosphorescent waves. And my eyes would search out one special point of light among those shining myriads, for it is the trysting spot of another pair of eyes, keen, far-seeing eyes dashed with the colour of the sea. We call it "our star," for no one else, I am sure, knows of it; and sometimes as I gazed I could see two tiny rays which marked the well-worn

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road by which our thoughts had travelled so often to their tryst. *The fate of Louise*

On such nights Mémé would confess Dôzne had its good points, and she already felt herself quite re-made. She was mistaken one day for the mother of the little *chou*. She said it was folly and imbecility for any one to make such an error, but she was as pleased as Punch, the dear thing.

Fracas and *bouleversements* continued as usual inside the big hotel, but Mémé and I heeded them little. The English conversations with Mademoiselle Louise came to an abrupt ending, owing to a melon which her mother bought on the *plage*, and inadvertently ate for dessert at the *table d'hôte*. It was an insult the *patron* could not pardon—*c'était fini*—and the pair quitted next morning. Our spirits were lapped in a false security engendered by absolute faith in Margaret's marvellous skill in managing her "lamb" ("larm" Margaret pronounced it). Margaret herself attributed the blessed change in the character of the little *chou* to her having learned to say the Lord's Prayer in English—a weird invoca-

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Margaret and the new woman tion all in one long word, — but “English,” so both maintained with pride. Margaret has grave doubts whether prayers offered in the heathenish, outlandish tongues of foreigners ever ascend to the throne of grace, and it went to her heart to think of the “wee larm” knowing no better.

Poor Margaret, she was often severely tried by “the foreigners,” as she insisted on calling them, though in their own land.

“Did ye see those awfu’ wimen, sad am I to call them such, on bicycles this morning, miss?” she asked me one day. “If they daured to ride so through the streets of Kildrummon, the provost would have them straight into the jail, or else the asylum.”

I begged for a description of these ladies; but Margaret replied that she could not shame her lips and my ears by saying what those hussies’ garments were and were not, but “a maist degrading spectacle,” that she could say.

Sunday was another of her trials. A notice pinned on the *salon* door raised her alarm: “*Bal d’enfants à quatre heures.*”

“What’s the meaning o’ that, noo?” she

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asked a waiter who announced that he spoke "ze English."

*The sin of
Sabbath-
breaking*

"Ah, ze dance! Mees loff moch zee leetler dance? 'E begin to four o'clock safternoon. *Folie, ça!*"

And he gave an airy *pirouette* before Margaret's scandalized eyes.

"Will ye believe me, miss, they're havin' a ball in this heathenish place on the Sabbath itself! A ball for the bairnies too. Teachin' 'em to defy the Lord on His own day! And that German nurse tells me the country folk are dancing every Sabbath the year round, and think no more of it than we in Scotland of going to kirk."

I suggested in excuse a "custom of the country for centuries past," etc., and by way of reinstating these peasants in Scotch esteem added, that they never failed to attend their church in the morning.

"The more shame to them!" said Margaret staunchly. "Their meenister canna be greatly endowed wi' grace, if they can go right from his discoorse to kicking their heels in a godless dance."

She was careful to take her "larm" for a

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*The end
in sight* long walk that afternoon, and the small boy Paul also. He followed the little *chou* as the lamb followed Mary. They returned singing two verses of the Old Hundredth in shrill tones which clashed oddly with the last *galop* of the *bal d'enfants*.

.

But the bolt fell at last with a rude shock. It was about nine o'clock one morning I sat with Mémé reading the *Figaro*, while Margaret had gone down to get her some tea. Presently we heard the sound of voices in furious altercation coming down the passage. Scarcely had my prophetic soul whispered *le patron*, when with a loud knock the door opened and in burst that gentleman, closely followed by Margaret holding her "wee larm" by the hand. The eyes of the little *chou* danced with pleased excitement; Margaret's face was pale; that of the *patron* a deep carnation. All three talked at once, while Margaret displayed her dress, saturated with milk, for our inspection.

We insisted on hearing *le patron* first, Margaret adjuring me not to believe a word, for he was "jest leeing as fast as he could

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talk, auld Nick was na a patch on him. *Le*
And how dared the ranting creetur enter *patron's*
madame's room and she in her bed!" *version*

The *patron* was incoherent from rage, but I made out at last that "the little devil together with this insolent one" had dared to trespass in his kitchen. The one had ventured to employ his servants and had insisted on using a jug he had forbidden her to touch, the impertinent *coquine* ! while the other, after damaging his property by dancing on the table, had insulted him in terms the most abominable. Ha-ha, yes! she, this little miserable one, had addressed him before all his servants as *cochon* . *Sa-pristi!* But it was really superb that!

Then and there she was to leave his house, or he would send for the *sergent de ville* to remove her. He shook his fist at the little *chou* who had scrambled on Mémé's bed and was recounting her story in shrill opposition to the *patron*.

"Po-licemans yes!" he turned on Margaret, "ee sall pet you in 'ze prison, zat I do tell you for sure — an you go not queek voman — miserable."

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS

*Margaret's
version*

"Calm yourself, monsieur, one moment," I implored him; while poor Mémé looked from one to the other, distracted. Margaret, who was not to be done out of her innings, took up the tale.

"I was jest gettin' madam's tea as by ordinar—the puir wee bairnie not doing a bit of harm—when in comes this rantin', tantin', tearin' Bully-jock, shoutin' and swearin' to right and left. I did na heed him, but jest kept pouring the milk into the juggie I always use, when up he comes and grabs the jug, and oh the language! thankfu' was I that I could na make out a word of it! I held on to the jug feart like the daft fule ud lose the milk, but he gave me arm a dunt and down went the juggie. Wi' that up rins the wee lambie there thinking to take me pairt, bless her, and 'oh, ye *ko-shong, ko-shong,*' she shouts at him. If it wis a word did gall him a bit, weel, I am nae sorry."

During this account *le patron* never ceased for one moment storming, vociferating, and threatening.

Intelligible conversation with him being

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hopeless, after expressing regret at what had *The price* occurred and assuring him Margaret had *of "le* not understood she was transgressing, I *mot "* begged he would leave the room, for I feared this scene, if prolonged, would give Madame la Baronne a crisis of the nerves.

A crisis of the nerves indeed! It was he who would have a crisis of the nerves, *parbleu!* "But it is finished! *Mille tonnerres!*" he roared. We should render him his rooms "on the field" (the battle-field, I thought). He gave us till the afternoon, and would meanwhile prepare our bill. His jug should be paid for. And one did not call him *cochon* for nothing. *Dame!* but no! he would have a *procès* and full reparation. But yes, we should see!

We had quite a touching scene with poor *madame la patronne*, and for her sake consented to pay five francs for the milk jug and Jacqueline's *cochon*. I gave her a little sketch of fishing boats which pleased her, and she in return pressed into my hands a basket of grapes for madame, with tears,

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Exit le patron begging me not to refuse, but stow them out of sight.

As we drove off we had a last sight of *le patron*. Mounted on a ladder he was vehemently shaking his fist and hurling abuse down on the head of Narcisse, the unhappy blacker of boots. *Tonnerre de Dieu!* had one ever beheld such an animal! such a head of a calf! But this time it was finished — quite finished!

“And now for a little distraction at Trouville, Betty, *ma chérie*,” cried Mémé. “We merit it well; enough of Louis’s peace and repose for me, *Dieu merci!*”

My visit to Trouville was fated to be a short one, however, for hardly had I shaken out my best Paris frocks when a letter, long delayed, reached me saying a certain gunboat of her Majesty’s had got disentangled at last from those icebergs and seals up in the Behring Sea, and was steaming homewards as hard as wind and wave permitted. I knew the crew of that gunboat, including the Lieutenant Commander, could not possibly land in a satisfactory manner to all parties unless I was on shore to welcome

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them. So I left Mémé and the again temporarily reformed little *chou* (I fear it is but *fini* temporary) in Margaret's safe keeping, and hurried back to England next day.

Of my French experiences for the moment, therefore, I must say in the parting words of *le patron*, "They are finished — quite finished!"





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